

ECOSYSTEM LEADERSHIP PROGRAM LATIN AMERICA

u-school for Transformation Presencing Institute

Module 1 Report 2023



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Introduction

We live in an era of disruption, uncertainty, and massive institutional failure, where collectively, we create outcomes that (almost) nobody wants. This situation is particularly acute in Latin America due to its severity and persistence.

It is the region with the lowest economic growth in the last ten years (less than 2.5%, with a GDP per capita lower than 20 years ago, according to the IMF), with enormous inequality and poverty (70 million people, with 11.2% in extreme poverty according to [ECLAC](#)).

It is the region where political polarization has increased the most in the last 20 years, with the lowest levels of trust and satisfaction with democracy, from 51% in 2013 to 70% in 2020 ([Latinobarómetro](#)). Additionally, there is a severe lack of integration and coordination

among the region's countries for continental agreements ([CEIUC](#)).

It is the most violent region, accounting for +30% of homicides worldwide while only comprising 9% of the total population.

It suffers from a complex migratory crisis, with an 83% increase in human displacement between 2010 and 2020 ([IDB-UNDP](#)).

It is one of the most vulnerable regions to climate change worldwide. At the same time, it hosts critical ecosystems to combat it and ensure biodiversity, which is systematically degrading. In the last ten years, the Amazon released more CO2 than it could absorb, losing 38% of its surface area in the previous two decades ([Nature](#)).

From the perspective of [Theory U](#), if we want to change the critical symptoms described above, we cannot



merely operate at the level of outcomes or respond from the same thought models that created and perpetuated the structures producing those symptoms.

We need a paradigm shift, which can only occur if we operate in the deep dynamics that generate them at the level of cultural, ontological, and motivational roots, at what Otto Scharmer calls the **"source of inspiration."**

New leadership skills are required

to carry out this present situation and sustain the social and environmental transformation we seek, allowing us to confront challenges more consciously, intentionally, and strategically. **Connecting with the "source of inspiration," activating our inherent capacities to manage change and uncertainty and reach our full potential.**

That is the purpose of this Program.

1. What is the Ecosystem Leadership Program LATAM 2023 - 2025?

The Ecosystem Leadership Program (ELP) emerges as an initiative of the [Presencing Institute](#) (PI) and local leaders to implement the global initiative of the U-school for transformation locally and regionally.

The Ecosystem Leadership Program (ELP) is a prototype of a regional platform for learning, exchange, and personal and collective development that brings together leaders, change agents, and influencers from multiple sectors and contexts in Latin America and the Caribbean. It proposes a new type of space and experience for ecosystem activation and personal, organizational, and social change based on consciousness.

Based on [Theory U](#), developed by [Otto Scharmer](#) at MIT, the Program provides the following:

- A theoretical and methodological framework for understanding dynamics and system change.

- Tools and practices for conscious leadership and impact in the context of the participants and within the regional ecosystem, connection, integration, and peer learning with leaders and change agents from across Latin America for ecosystem activation.

- An immersive experience of profound personal and collective transformation.



Participants in immersion activity

» The Program is ministered by the faculty from the Presencing Institute, including co-founder Professor Otto Scharmer (MIT).

The Program's essence is a diverse, inclusive, horizontal, participatory space that integrates different forms of knowledge and

intelligence: academic knowledge, ancestral wisdom from indigenous people, social innovation, art, body presence, and experiential learning from experience and contact with nature.



“ In the ELP, we created a container and cultivated the soil for each participant to open up to their transformation and co-create the conditions for social transformation. We cannot transform anything if we do not transform ourselves. ”

Laura Pastorini-Uruguay

“ These dreams were possible thanks to the encounter. These dreams are an essential symptomatic data point about the state of the current world.

People are waking up or are in the process of waking up in many places. Almost everyone believes we are at an existential juncture in our collective journey as a species. This is when we must come together to find meaning and chart our path forward. It can evolve into something other than a multi-day or multi-week process. Because people already know something is broken, something needs our attention now.

However, a minimal enabling infrastructure is often needed to activate this type of gathering in cities, countries, and regions needing collective action.

Returning from this emotional peak and bringing change to the organization is challenging. Returning to the routine we did not question before, the experience is challenging.

When we go through a profound change process and return to the reality that has gone through that change, we notice the distance between us and the routine we were used to. Furthermore, we ask ourselves: What are we doing? Moreover, that is the right question to ask ourselves. It is where we can help each other.

Paying attention to this is crucial. We are paying attention to what is overvalued and what is undervalued. What can we integrate into our daily practices? Let us pay attention to the challenges. We want to tackle them head-on because that is where the opportunity lies. ”

Otto Scharmer



Otto Scharmer
Co-founder Presencing Institute

1.1 Program Structure

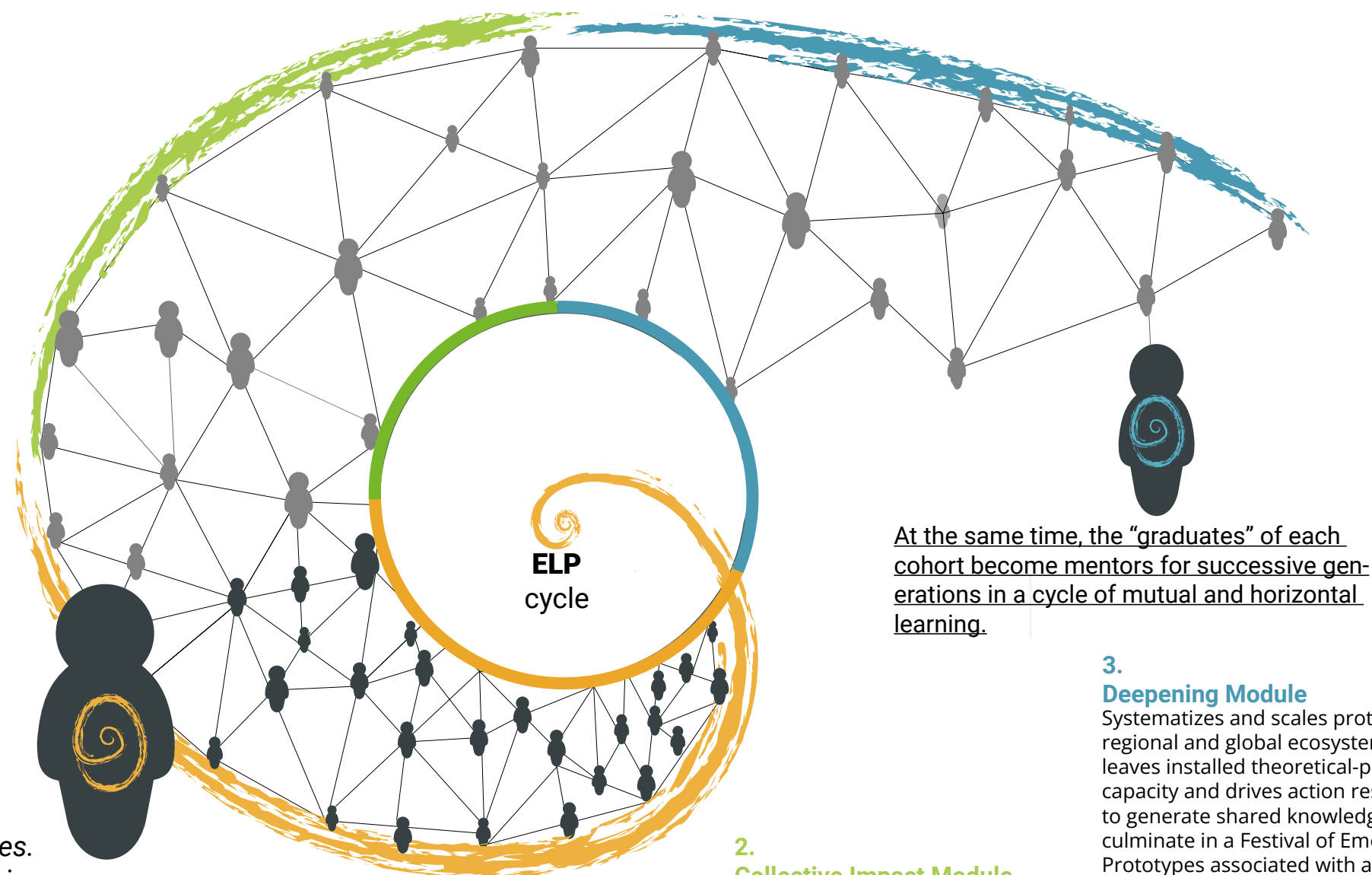
The Ecosystem Leadership Program is a 3-module cycle (2023 - 2025)

In each annual meeting, successive generations coexist, exchange, and provide feedback in a cycle of horizontal learning. As a result, each cycle forms a community of more than 500 leaders who positively impact their contexts, generate transformative regional initiatives, and connect globally on emerging platforms for planetary ecosystem change.

“ Now we are all connected with each other's stories. Those stories are part of ours, not separately, but intertwined, woven into the complex patterns formed by the conversations of this beautiful community. ”

Helio Borges - Venezuela

Between modules, MIT online courses are offered (u-lab 1x and 2x), courses in different forms of social arts, self-managed internships and follow-up sessions and support for the prototyping of initiatives.

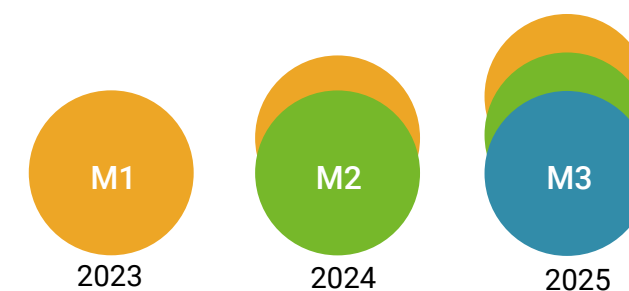


At the same time, the “graduates” of each cohort become mentors for successive generations in a cycle of mutual and horizontal learning.

1. Foundational Module
Provides knowledge and practices to enhance leadership and personal transformation, building bridges and connections among participants for ecosystem activation of the region.

2. Collective Impact Module
Seeks collective transformation and systemic impact within the participants' context by applying methodologies and developing prototypes on crucial issues for the region.

3. Deepening Module
Systematizes and scales prototypes for regional and global ecosystem impact, leaves installed theoretical-practical capacity and drives action research to generate shared knowledge. It will culminate in a Festival of Emerging Prototypes associated with an Impact Investment and Philanthropy 4.0 initiative.



1.2. What do we practice in ELP Latin America?

The Program aims to develop capacities in three fundamental areas of Ecosystem Leadership:

a. **Systems thinking:**

Seeing a system from multiple perspectives; using multiple intelligences - head, heart, hand; identifying invisible dynamics.

b. **Collaborative and participatory leadership:**

Deep listening, trust relationships, co-creation, integration, and participation in spaces of diversity.

c. **Trust in Action for an emerging future:**

Openness to transformation, courage to try new ideas, ability to endure discomfort in moments of disruption.



Young participant in activity led by grandmothers, ritual healing

For that, the ELP proposes:

- A systems approach that integrates disruption and complexity, providing new perspectives to address and transform problems at their root.
- A methodology and tools to cultivate leadership based on mindfulness at both personal and collective levels, focusing on the needs of the region.
- An ecosystem activation of stakeholders, sectors, and networks across the continent, exchanging

experiences for collective action based on consciousness.

- New capabilities and forms of leadership that embody innovation, collaboration, and consciousness to tackle the significant challenges of the current moment.

- Innovative tools and practices to make regional change agents more effective and activate new forms of intelligence.

1.3 What is Ecosystem Leadership? An expanded perspective

The Program began with the question:
What is Ecosystem Leadership?

According to Otto Scharmer, ecosystem leadership is essentially, from a systems perspective, “the capacity of a person to sense and create the future” or “the capacity to co-sense and step into the future” to ‘step forward’ in a context of broken, fragmented pieces.

At the same time, it is an opportunity to work towards the dissolution of boundaries. To reach a deeper level of connection, becoming genuinely aware of the profound differences and inequalities, creating a different space for listening and conversation, creating something like an extension of consciousness towards all intentions, and being present in the difference in diversity.

Staying in a state of presence and attentive to the socio-environmental transformation that manifests as urgent and not always visible.



Teachers and participants celebrate the arrival of a condor during the opening ceremony



Ecosystem leadership is particularly relevant in today's interconnected world, where challenges such as climate change, economic inequality, and technological disruptions require collaborative and holistic approaches. It emphasizes the importance of shared responsibility and collective action to create a positive and lasting impact.



Moreover, how do we make it visible and urgent?

According to the teachings of Kurt Lewin, who coined and developed the concept of Action Research: 'the system cannot be understood unless it is transformed.' Indeed, if one wants to understand the deeper dimension of current system change, one must first intervene. More is needed to look at it from a distance: being on the ground and making the system visible to everyone's eyes.

Secondly, having a set of methods and tools for personal and systemic transformation, change and conflict resolution, co-creation, and co-evolution enables us to overcome social, environmental, and spiritual divisions instead of deepening them.

The third action to make it visible is a movement. It is part of a planetary movement. **Where is that in our hearts? What kind of relationships do we nurture?** That is where the movement is already present, but

it is a movement that needs more self-awareness; it needs some of the amplification mechanisms we need at this moment to transition to collective intentions, sustaining and connecting with oneself, with the community, and the globe.

In pragmatic terms, ecosystem leadership refers to a leadership approach that involves being part of a more significant movement and collaborating with various stakeholders, organizations, and individuals to address complex challenges and opportunities within a broader ecosystem. This approach recognizes that many problems are interconnected and require collective effort to achieve meaningful solutions.

Participants talking during an ecosystem group activity

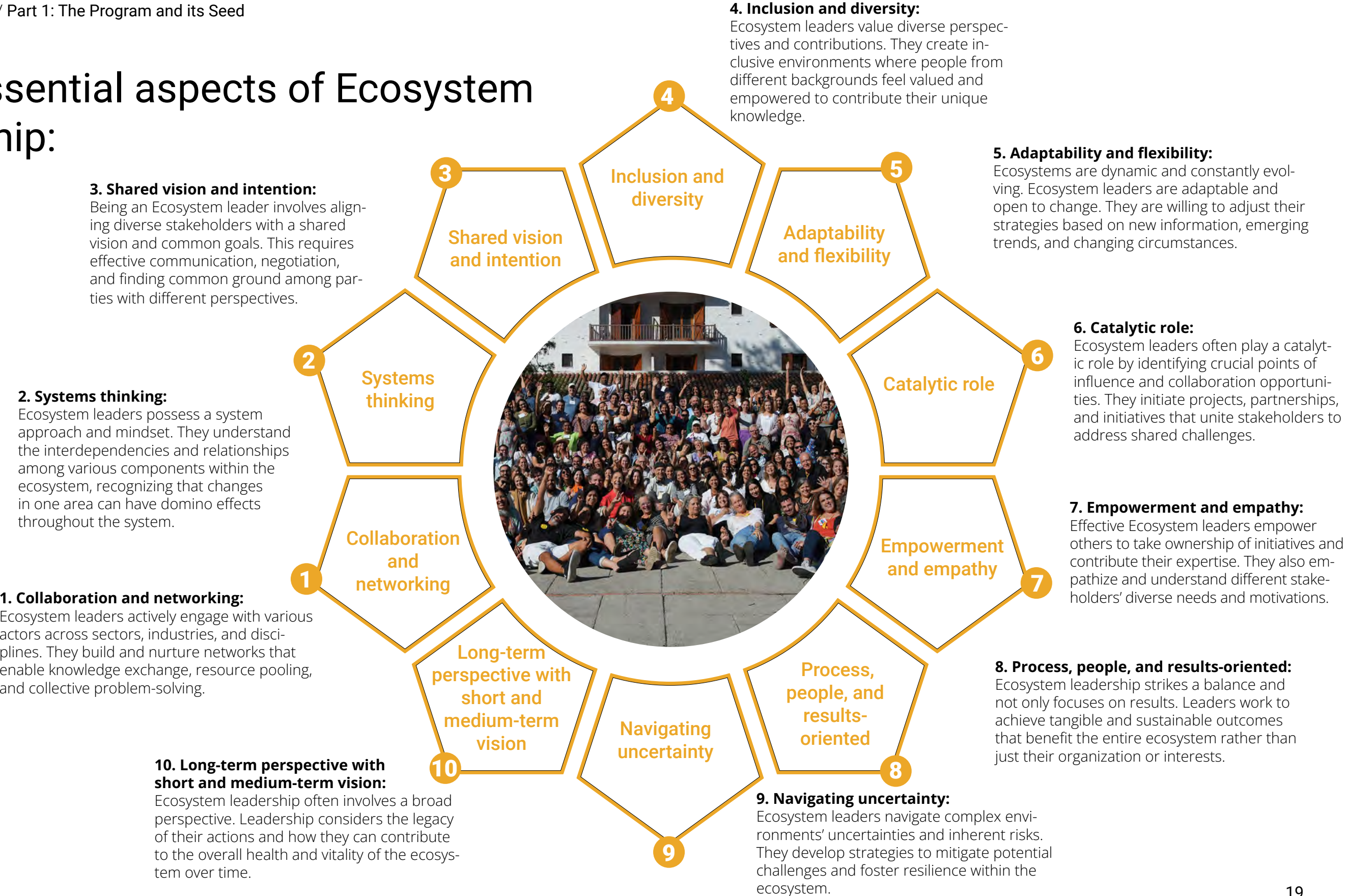


“ In my wildest expectations, I could never have envisioned the transformative impact I witnessed. I want to continue living this experience. I feel like a better person every time I do something whose benefit, more than for me, is for my territory and its people. ”

Jaime Jiménez - Colombia



Some essential aspects of Ecosystem Leadership:





“ Leadership is a function of life, a natural manifestation, and we sign up to join the movement. How leadership reaches me is the point: flowing towards the unknown and collective intentions.”

Mariana Suniata A Miranda - Brasil



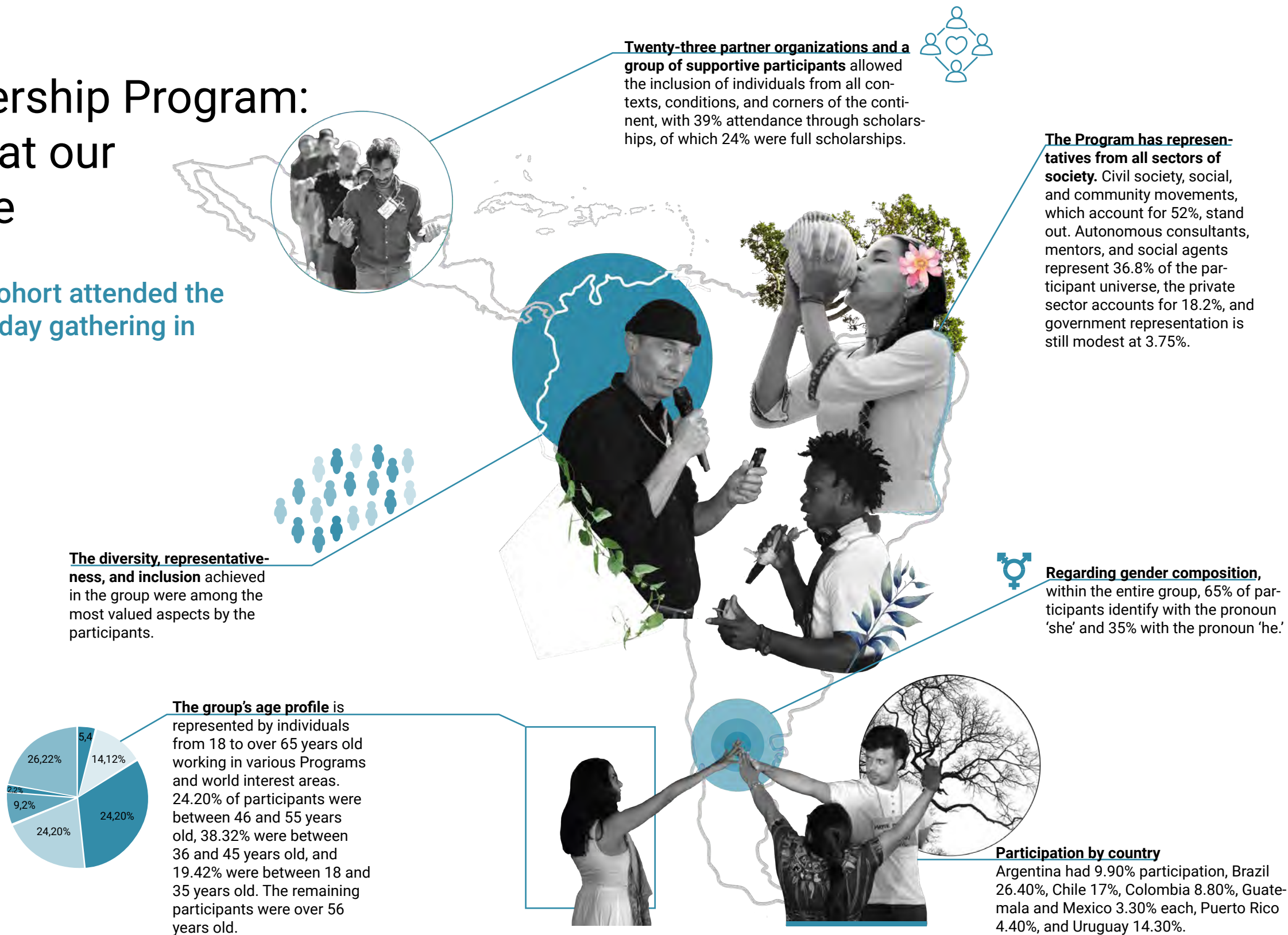
Participants prepare for Social Presencing Theater practice

2. Ecosystem Leadership Program: Who we are and what our common causes are

Last March, the Program’s first cohort attended the Foundational Module during a 5-day gathering in Colonia, Uruguay.

One hundred sixty (160) leaders from 17 countries participated, selected through careful curation from nearly 480 applicants. Additionally, a multicultural team of 22 individuals joined the Program.

The participating countries were Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, Puerto Rico, Uruguay, and Venezuela. (Others: Germany, Spain, USA, Kenya, and the Netherlands).



2.1 Ecosystemic Groups: Regeneration and Climate, Inclusion and Diversity, Social Justice and Human Rights, Human Development and Well-being, Conscious Economy.

Participants worked in groups around critical areas of impact for regional transformation. Below are some impact ideas that will serve as seeds for the second module, turning ideas into action.

1. Regeneration and Climate

Regeneration refers to restoring and renewing natural systems that have been degraded or damaged. It can be applied to ecosystems, soils, forests, and other natural environments. Regeneration is essential for maintaining biodiversity, improving soil health, and combating environmental degradation. Some everyday actions for regeneration include Reforestation, Soil conservation, Wetland restoration, and

Sustainable resource management. Climate Change is one of the most significant environmental challenges. Greenhouse gases (GHGs) derived from human activities contribute to global warming. Some actions to address Climate Change include Emission reduction, Adaptation, Carbon capture, and Clean energy. Regeneration and Climate Change mitigation must be addressed in an integrated manner.



2. Inclusion and Diversity

Inclusion and diversity are fundamental concepts for transforming the world. They are essential in various political, labor, educational, and social areas. These concepts focus on creating environments that respect and value individual differences, promoting equal opportunities and full participation of all individuals, regardless of their characteristics.

3. Social Justice and Human Rights

Social justice and human rights are interrelated concepts that focus on ensuring equality, equity, and dignity for all people, regardless of their differences. Both concepts address fundamental aspects of human coexistence and the construction of just societies. Social justice is the equitable distribution of resources, opportunities, and rights. It seeks to address the inequalities and promote inclusion to ensure all in-

dividuals have access to dignified living conditions. Social justice involves addressing discrimination, poverty, exclusion, and other social issues that may hinder individuals from reaching their full potential. Fundamental principles of social justice include Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, Citizen Participation, and Human Rights. Human rights are inherent to all human beings, regardless of nationality, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, or other characteristics. These rights are universal, inalienable, and indivisible and are enshrined in documents such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

4. Human Development and Well-being

Human Development and well-being refer to the improvement and promotion of the quality of life of individuals, as well as progress in aspects that contribute to society's overall well-being. This approach involves economic growth and development in education, health, equality, citizen participation, and other elements that positively impact people's lives. In a broader

sense, 'Human Development and Well-being' seeks to ensure that individuals have access to basic needs and opportunities that enable them to reach their full potential and enjoy a fulfilling and meaningful life.

This concept is often related to human development indices that go beyond measuring gross domestic product (GDP) and consider broader indicators of social progress.



Otto Scharmer talks to participants about harvesting ecosystem groups

5. Conscious Economy

The conscious economy encompasses the spectrum of new economies committed to minimizing the negative social and environmental impact of human activities. It comprises a framework of systemic solutions addressing global challenges such as social justice, inequality, climate change, biodiversity loss, waste, and pollution. It relies on transitioning to clean energy and

renewable materials and decouples economic activity from consuming finite resources, generating a structure change, with humans linked to ecosystem well-being.

3. Seeds and Prototypes

Map of the Program

From the work by the ecosystemic groups and the program's transversal approach, more than 50 seed initiatives for impact actions in the region emerged.



3.1 How was the 2023 program experienced?

Day 1. Co-Initiate:

Create the container and the common intention. Who and why are we here?

Day 2. Co-Sense:

Listen to the voices of the field and perceive our current moment and its emerging possibilities.

Day 3. Presencing:

Connect with the source of inspiration and will.
Embody presence, silence, and deep reflection for inner knowing to emerge.

Day 5. Co-Evolve:

Identify new paths and connections to impact different contexts and dimensions.

Day 4. Co-Create:

Crystallize the emergent in thematic groups, uniting the head, heart, and hands.



Graphic facilitation of the Program / Generative Scribing

Image credit: Geisa Paganini De Melo

The Program concluded with an invitation to pay attention to what is overvalued and undervalued today in our lives and work.



Otto Scharmer

“Change is like meditation. You notice it and then get distracted. Your job is not to feel bad about it but to realize and refocus. It is a daily practice.”

» To get a glimpse of the Program, watch the following videos:

Video Ecosystem Leadership Program Latin America.

Edition 2023, Foundational Module



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kz7Xb1Zr9LM>

Ecosystem Leadership Program.

Nueva Helvecia, Uruguay, March 2023



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HgC>NNL6Vmqg>

4. ELP through the lens of Awareness-Based Systems Change

This second part of the report of the Ecosystem Leadership Program focuses on Awareness-Based Systems Change - an Action Research approach for social transformation based on shifts in consciousness.

Awareness-Based Systems Change constitutes an emerging intersectoral, inter-, and transdisciplinary research field that brings a first and second-person perspective to the field of systemic thinking and systems change. Awareness-Based Systems Change, as an emerging paradigm, is not about providing definitive answers but to pose new questions about systems transformation.

In applied research spaces like the Ecosystem Leadership Program (ELP) in Uruguay, we believe that not only does it strengthen the learning cycle of training and leadership programs, but new knowledge is created through emerging patterns in

the range of experiences and viable approaches. This reflects an essential spirit of the present report, focusing on the collective exploration of transformation from an awareness-based perspective¹.

¹ For further exploration in this field, see JABSC - Journal for Awareness-Based Systems Change. <https://jabsc.org/index.php/jabsc>



A qualitative evaluation of personal experiences in the ELP

This section aims to delve into the experience of six ELP participants in Uruguay in 2023, using the perspective and methodologies of Awareness-Based Systems Change. Three individuals from indigenous communities in Guatemala and Colombia were interviewed, along with two associated with regeneration in Uruguay and Chile and one from the entrepreneurial field in Argentina.

Qualitative semi-structured interviews are combined with elements from micro-phenomenology developed by Claire Petitmengin². This

approach serves to explore experiences such as: What happens when an idea arises, when entering a social field, or when listening to music? Or when experiencing dynamics like 4D Mapping or Ritual in the ELP? These phenomena, constitutive of the texture of existence itself, are challenging to describe and have been largely excluded from scientific research.

² For more information <https://www.microphenomenology.com/home>

4.1 'The Essence' of ELP

» The first part of the interviews focused on 'the essence' of the Ecosystem Leadership Program from the participants' perspective. The essence refers to what participants value most from their experience or primary reflections.



What is the essence you take from the regional ELP program in Uruguay?

■ **Martin Toc:**

The Theory U program showed me that my inner essence, worldview, and people are valuable. I don't have to learn the model of Uruguay because it has its uniqueness and context. I have to learn my particularity of being Maya, which has an essence, worldview, and interpretation. So, I return to 'the source.' The source is where I am, my essence. When I connect with someone who has also found their essence and understands that it is in their territory, we start to dialogue, not confront or compete, because we flow together. The most important conclusion is that everyone has a space where they fit within the ecosystem. A companion not fitting into their space has repercussions on the entire ecosystem. If we made that connection, we would have more inclusive and more collective societies, not so individualized. We would realize that we are unique; we have our source, but we need others to flow.



"The most important conclusion is that everyone has a space where they fit within the ecosystem"

Martin Toc

Indigenous leader from Guatemala, president of the 48 cantons of Totonicapán

What do you value most about the regional perspective of the Program?

■ Miguel Ángel Chaparro:

What I most value is the need to generate changes and how to start within oneself. Creating 'agents' with diverse people, varied studies, populations with different worldviews, and ways of acting, makes change happen. Building something that inspires us, something we want to do differently.

One of the things I've seen is that changes which are happening in our



community and its place are also happening worldwide. Multiple existing knowledges must be considered to face these challenges. That is a message one takes from the program. One term that describes the complexity of the world is called 'polycrisis.' How do we approach and understand it? How can it be solved? The methodology or way of addressing these challenges is a practical tool one takes away from the program. The regional perspective of the event was also helpful in that regard.



Miguel Ángel Chaparro
Member of the Arhuaca indigenous community of Santa Marta, Colombia.



Maximiliano Costa
Founder of AMBÁ, Regeneration, Uruguay

What was essential about the ELP?

■ Maximiliano Costa:

I believe that sometimes it is not so much about using the tools of Theory U, but that the tool itself is a way of seeing, not only with the eyes but also with the heart and even with the body: How is my body feeling in certain moments? That is to say, using our own resources at various levels rather than applying a method. It always helps me to use the methodology in a workshop and bring it to the theoretical part, returning to that 'harder' data. The first

thing that manifested in me was passing processes through that perspective and bringing it to the connection with others. Thus, the journeys of the U can be infinite. They can be reinvented and invented depending on contexts, perspectives, and personal and organizational situations.

What reflections on ecosystem leadership emerged from the program?

■ Maximiliano Costa:

Most of the conversations I had during the meeting were reflections on what Otto was bringing about the Structure 4.0 for the evolution of society and territories — for example, the importance of prototyping and making territories laboratories for this 4.0 level. The perspective of this 4.0 level helped me conceptualize something that I already felt as a personal and organizational aspiration but needed

to have the capacity to synthesize into a model. In this sense, Theory U validates what various individuals and organizations have been doing. Without this approach, contributions can remain somewhat ethereal, without foundations, because we are more accustomed to linear thinking. Consequently, Theory U is an excellent bridge to connect the worlds.

Four Stages of Systems Evolution, Four Operating Systems

Operating System	Health	Learning	Farm/Food	Finance	Development	Governance	Sustainability & ESG
1.0: Input & Authority-Centric	Traditional Doctor-Centric	Traditional Teacher-Centric	Traditional Farmer-Centric	Traditional Banker-Centric	Mercantilism: Gold Reserves	Visible Hand: Hierarchy	Compliance
2.0: Output & Efficiency-Centric	Evidence-Based Medicine	Testing Driven: Fast In, Fast Out Learning	Industrial Agriculture: Monocultures	Extractive Capital: Externality Blind	Economic Output: GDP	Invisible Hand: Market	Resource Efficiency
3.0: Outcome & User-Centric	Patient-Centric Medicine	Learner-Centric	Organic Ag: Reduce Negative Footprint	Impact Investing: Select Externality-Aware, ESG	Human Wellbeing: HDI	Organized Interest Groups: Coalition Building	Business Innovation / Net Zero
4.0: Regenerative & Eco-System-Centric	Strengthening Sources of Wellbeing	Whole Person, Whole Systems Learning: Ed for Human Flourishing	Regenerative Agriculture: Food as Medium for Healing Planet and People	Regenerative Finance: Transforming Systems, Externality-Aware	Human and Planetary Wellbeing: PHDI, GNH	CASA: Collective Action from Shared Awareness	Purpose: Ecosystem Transformation

Structure 4.0

4.0 structures, or ecosystemic structures, work by connecting and organizing the entire ecosystem around a shared purpose and institutional interdependence (Scharmer, 2018)³.

³ Scharmer O. (2018). The essentials of Theory U. Berrett-Koehler Publishers.

Conclusions

'The essence' of the ELP

Listening to these voices from ELP about the essence, **patterns emerge** that show the interconnectedness between inner change and systems transformation.

The interviews and voices show that changes begin with an **inner transformation** of the agents themselves. On the one hand, the variation is related to **the capacity for perception and presence**, a way of seeing not only with the eyes but also with 'the heart' through the entire capacity to feel the body. On the other hand, each person has their own **particularity, cultural identity**, and experiences from a specific place, that is from contextual knowledge.

On this last point, it is essential to add the multiple existing perspectives to face the challenges of the 'polycrisis.' It becomes clear that each community has something to contribute to the global challenge, from its context, lived experience and the place it inhabits. This perspective of complementarity also refers to the unique

place of contribution within the ecosystem when everyone keeps the connection to source.

Everyone has an essence and worldview, a way of seeing and interpreting the world. Suppose a collective dialogue begins, where each being participates from their place of nature and connection with source. In that case, there is the possibility of ceasing to compete and starting to flow together. Thus, it could **create an ecosystem where everyone finds a space where they can fit in and contribute.**

Finally, the 4.0 level of Theory U helps visualize and synthesize the feelings of various organizations and individuals who are still lacking a language and concepts to express themselves. In this way, Theory U **models bridge, legitimize and shape an emerging paradigm of systems evolution.**

4.2 Perspectives on the Social Field of the ELP

Pomeroy y Herrmann (2023)⁴, in their article on ‘social fields,’ demonstrate that we are constantly immersed in them. Whether consciously or unconsciously, we know their nature. For example, when entering an office, a classroom, or a leadership program like the ELP, one perceives the atmosphere of that social space, even if not consciously, and it influences our behaviour, feeling and thinking.

Pomeroy and Herrmann understand the social field as a social-psychological space that exists in between and through individuals and in which patterns of interpersonal and collective behavior are embedded. The nature of this space is such that it “encourages” some behaviors, feelings, and thoughts, and

“discourages” others (2023).

Being more consciously aware of social fields opens the opportunity to exercise more agency in their co-creation. Therefore it is a central concept for advancing Awareness-Based Systems Change.

Below are excerpts from perceptions of two participants about the social field in the ELP. They serve as examples of social field dynamics of encouragement and discouragement.



⁴ Pomeroy, E., & Herrmann, L. (2023). Social Fields: Knowing the Water We Swim in. The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00218863231174957>



Pedro Friedrich
Co-director of Sistema B
Argentina and entrepreneur

How did you perceive the social field of the ELP?

■ Pedro Friedrich:

*It was very positive to find ourselves in the ecosystem. Some of us knew each other, others didn't, but I felt at home because **we vibrated on the same frequency**. A large number of people felt at home, and at the same time, they **felt that they were not alone, that there were others in this movement** or some eager to belong. It's not a minor issue; if we are always the same, it's essential, but it's not enough; we must include more beings. In this place, ev-*

everything is possible. With a less committed audience, explaining why I think or say this is always necessary. There, explanations are unnecessary because the participants knew where we were going.

How did you perceive the social field of the ELP?



■ Martín Toc:

My conclusion arose when we had a problem and only expressed two emotions: positivity and peace, but we never let the anger flow. It was interesting to see how some people experienced frustration over some interaction but did not dare to express it in front of everyone. We kept criticisms to ourselves because we did not feel confident enough to express them.

Conclusions

The social field of the ELP

Research on social fields is still in its early stages, and there is a need to develop more extensive measurements of the social fields generated in programs like the ELP.

According to the interview statement above, two ways of perceiving the social field are shown. On the one hand, “vibrating on the same frequency” with like-minded people, which facilitates coherence in the direction of collective transfor-

mation a crucial aspect for the formation of ‘transformation systems’ (Waddock, 2022)⁵. On the other hand, this coherence can discourage the articulation of differences or friction.

This information is valuable for understanding the social fields generated by programs and how one can be a more conscious agent of their co-creation.



⁵ Waddock S., et al. (2022). Convening Transformation Systems to Achieve System Transformation. JABSC, Journal of Awareness-Based Systems Change, Volume 2, Issue 1. <https://doi.org/10.47061/jabsc.v2i1.2023>

Working group in its visual co-crystallization process

4.3 The 4D Mapping. Social Art as a tool for Social Transformation

Integrating the 'Social Arts' into the methodological design of programs and transformation processes is key for the Presencing Institute.

In the introduction of the book *Social Presencing Theater: The Art of Making True Movement* by Arawana Hayashi (2021), Otto Scharmer describes social art as a set of methodologies and tools that change agents are using to facilitate transformational change in their relationships, communities, organizations or government agencies.

The '4D Mapping' integrates contemplative practices, embodiment, awareness, the process of Theory U, and organizational constellations applying it to social change. Its purpose is to allow a system to "see and feel itself." Behind the 4D Mapping is the question: How could the whole system be seen or perceived? It is accepted to say that there is a

"system out there" of which one is not a part nor responsible for the problems it causes. In these instances, voices of judgment, cynicism, or fear arise. Social Presencing Theater, a practice created by Arawana Hayashi, invites the recognition that all people are co-creators of the systems in which they live. It invites us to stop seeing systems as something external and to perceive with humility that the external system lives within (Hayashi, 2021).

The main interest of 4D Mapping is the movement of social fields from an ego awareness, with separate parts operating in their bubble, towards a more complete awareness of the ecosystem as a whole. Below are excerpts from a micro-phenom-

enological interview with Maximiliano Costa, which sought to explore the experience of an observer participant of the 4D Mapping of the ELP. The guiding question was: What happens inside, when experiencing a 4D Mapping, and how are those social field shifts perceived?

Final reflections from the Colombian team on their case in 4D Mapping



» An essential moment in the change of the Social Field of the ELP was the '4D Mapping,' which focused on the case of an organization working with youth in Colombia, located in Buenaventura.



Did you feel a change in the social field during the 4D Mapping?

■ Maximiliano Costa:

The 4D Mapping has a physical phenomenon and subtle sensation. I could feel the group's heart; it truly embodied the collectives' heart.

Many of us were moved by the story of Colombia, but that experience also helped us connect with our own lives. It took us to a personal experience, to a collective-territorial experience of Uruguay or the reality of Argentina. From that perspective, it did not matter who spoke; it was the perspec-



tive of the same heart manifesting in different ways. I feel this is moving from the dimension of the ego to the dimension of eco.

Evocation of the 4D Mapping What do you see when you remember the 4D Mapping?

I see one of them looking towards the area where I am. I was outside of the conflict or the situation of the field. I am experiencing many emotions of what is happening in the mapping, while its simultaneously related with my personal history. It is like I am entering and exiting that field while being there. The action is happening outside, but what manifests comes

from within me. Sometimes, I focus on one of the participants and their body posture, but that stirs up my thoughts and breathing. Sometimes, I feel physical discomfort, comfort, and intense energy.



Participants embodying roles of system actors, in the 4D Mapping

How do you perceive that energy, and what bodily sensations are you feeling?

It is like a 'channel' from the earth, through the trunk to the sky, like an actively functioning stream. When I connect like this, with the whole, with that union, with what is happening inside and outside, it generates well-being, peace, and openness in the chest. I cannot reach that same sensation now, but closing my eyes and trying to feel it brings me closer to that moment and the experience.



Do you remember another sensation that was present at that moment?

When tensions or a complicated moment arose, my 'stomach' would also tighten or my breathing would become choppy. I could not find the most comfortable position to sit.

Any other moment you remember?

I am trying to remember what Otto brought in the closing of the 4D Mapping. But I remember feeling that his conclusions and perspective organized the whole experience for me.



Conclusions

The micro-phenomenological interview

At the beginning of this section, the importance of a system sensing and seeing itself was mentioned several times. This feeling also includes understanding that the system is not only outside but lives within, and the individual is part of its co-creation.

The micro-phenomenological interview shows how social arts invite a deep space of perception and somatic experiences, where clear separations between the 'self' and the 'system out there' dissolve.



At the end of the interview session with Maximiliano Costa, he commented: "I feel that the work of the Presencing Institute is organizing these experiences, giving them a shape so that dialogue can occur between the subtlest, deep, and intuitive worlds and the western, more rational world. Today it became clearer to me that Theory U is a bridge."

Sculpture of the actor representing the government in the 4D Mapping

4.4 Indigenous Ceremonies for Social Transformation

The role of indigenous peoples' ritual and ceremonies in social change.



Victor Turner, one of the most influential anthropologists of the 20th century, highlighted the role of ritual and ancient ceremonies of indigenous peoples for social change. The author hypothesized that the dialectical relationship of ritual with social structure is the same in all societies and, therefore, can serve as a general concept for analysis and interpretation. Turner introduced the idea of conceiving ritual not as a conservative force but as an agent of societal change (Turner, 1977)⁶. This potential is equally relevant for contemporary social transformation.

⁶ Turner, V. (1977). *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*. Cornell University Press.



At the ELP meeting, archaeologist Coral Herencia co-designed the three ceremonies with the indigenous elders Amalia Tum, of the Maya Nation of Guatemala, and Alejandrina Ayala, from the Aruni-Quechua Nation of Peru. The three ceremonies were carried out from an intercultural approach to strengthen the transformational process.



Some elements of the ritual design are shared in continuation.



Grandmother Alejandrina,
from the Andean tradi-
tion, sharing in ceremony

How did the three ceremonies' design unfold throughout the ELP's U process?

■ Coral Herencia:

I had understood the U process through my experience at the 'Emergentes' event in Santiago, Chile. So, I drew it and expressed to the grandmothers that this process invited a path with which we resonate. Ultimately, it was about finding ourselves, inviting healing, and uplifting the flowers, the blossoming. This journey happens oftentimes in the ceremonies of indigenous communities, not necessarily in a single encounter, but it always goes in that direction.



Coral Herencia
Co-creator of the Cuidemos
Paraísos Foundation, Chile

The three Ceremonies

■ Coral Herencia:

The ceremony to ask for permission

The first ceremony was to ask for permission. That was a powerful key for the social field because it opened up the magic and the entrusting to the invisible. We are not used to this aspect: asking permission from the place and acknowledging that there is something greater than us. The practice opens the heart, emotion, respect, and humility. So, after the ceremony, everyone was open-hearted. The ceremony allowed us to reach another level of listening and attention.



The healing ceremony

The second one was the healing ceremony. There was a discharge of the social field, with all the wounds carried silently and now challenged to open up. Everything that weighs and is invisible comes out because it is in the unconscious, emotional wounds, or trauma spectrum. It is silenced content because there is never time to talk about it, or it produces shame. Suddenly, the grandmothers came and said, 'Let us heal abuses'. We have permission to do it, and collectively, we heal ourselves with courage.



For many participants the ceremonies were a new experience in leadership spaces

The blossoming ceremony

Finally, there was the ceremony of blossoming. It was the space in the social field to acknowledge that difficulties will continue. For example, we are still experiencing a climate crisis, but at the same time, we realize that we must keep walking forward. The blossoming ceremony opened the space to understand that dialectic and to raise hope to keep walking because otherwise, there will not have the strength to achieve it. This ceremony is the anthem to manifest and not be indifferent."



Grandmother Amalia Tum
Maya healer and 'time counter',
Guatemala

"It was not folklore but a universal spirituality of how to love each other as human beings."

Grandmother Amalia:

For me, it was not folklore but a deep concentration of all the elements and energies in a short time. I didn't come to play; I came to lend my service as a healer and a 'time counter' (contadora de tiempo), through the energy of my ancestors and the ancestors of this place.

It was essential to ask permission from the space. In the blossoming ceremony, for me, lighting the fire is feeding the path, the essence of all people, through connection with this element. It was an authentic millennial spirituality, not a protocol. Folklore can be only about the fire and the pretty colours, but in the end, nobody connects.

It is time for the Western mind to integrate the spiritual dimension and respect for the earth. It should not only be about extracting natural resources. If I cut down trees, I am responsible for planting new trees. Large companies

often do not care about the life of rivers or humans. That is why the integration of respect is so vital in our thinking.

I was impressed by the movement that was awakened in Uruguay. Seeing that our presence from Andean and Maya spirituality aroused interest in people to know themselves.

The message for me is to return to practices, values, and principles. There lies the salvation of Mother Earth and the environment because everything we are as humans is concentrated in this realm.



This prototype was inspiring for the ELP Latam team, and they will continue to deepen the potential for social transformation that comes from the encounter between Theory U and ancestral practices.

Conclusions

The three movements of ancient rituals in synergy with Theory U

When talking about the ‘three movements’ in Theory U, reference is made to 1) **observing**, 2) **withdrawing and reflecting**, and 3) **acting in an instant** (Scharmer, 2016)⁷. It is interesting to see that the three movements of ancient rituals 1) **meeting and asking for permission**, 2) **inviting healing**, and 3) **the blossoming of the flowers**, were working in high synergy for the activation of the social field of the ELP. This inclusion was one of the first prototypes, where rituals had such an essential place in the program design.

As Coral Herencia states: “The three moments that we designed with the grandmothers to experience the U came intuitively, but at the same time, they are the way they have always lived their ceremonies. So, there was a surprise on both sides: the grandmothers were surprised by the ‘ancestry’ of Theory U, and the participants were surprised at

how natural it was to reconnect with this spirituality. It was a beautiful feedback loop.”

The complementarity of **the two ‘social technologies’** is worth noting: **the ancestral and the U**. The ancestral always begins with a ritual asking for permission in its co-initiating process. All deep conversations in indigenous traditions begin with a request for permission so that the emerging word arises in synchrony with the vision that life, mother nature, and the forces of nature, coming from an ‘eco-centric’ paradigm.

In this regard, when the Social Presencing Theater opens the intelligence of the heart and makes visible the patterns and wisdom of the social field, while ancient rituals allow us to synchronize with nature’s intelligence. This facilitates change from an ‘eco-awareness’ including the more-than-human world.

⁷ Scharmer O. (2016). Theory U: Leading from the future as it emerges (2nd edition). Berrett-Koehler Publishers.

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