ACTIVITIES

RESEARCH

In each location, we are working with local people to carry out empirical research to understand what transformations are taking place, who is involved and what dilemmas exist. The research process aims to help us to address barriers and reveal opportunities to pursue inclusive, sustainable transformations.

T-LABS

The project designs T-Labs (or Transformation Labs) in each location: highly-designed, expert-facilitated processes to support multi-stakeholder groups to address a complex social problem. The T-Labs benefit from including diverse people with different views on the problem, and the power to make a change. Over time, they aim to produce 'prototypes' or ideas for specific innovations in each location.

CROSSING CONTINENTS

Teams in each of the 6 hubs meet together virtually and organise exchanges, so they can learn from each other's insights and improve their methodologies.

COMMUNICATION

Jointly-written blog posts, media and reports from the T-Labs help to share insights from the project to a wider audience.

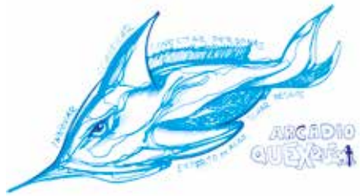

Photo: T-Lab on food systems in Brighton (Photo: STEPS)

Illustration: 'Avatar' created by participant at the Mexico T-Lab (Photo: B. Ruizpalacios)

Project partners

- ESRC STEPS Centre, Institute of Development Studies and SPRU (Science Policy Research Unit) at the University of Sussex, UK
- CENIT, Argentina
- Beijing Normal University, China
- Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), India
- Stockholm Resilience Centre (SRC), Sweden
- Africa Sustainability Hub and African Centre for Technology Studies (ACTS), Kenya
- LANCIS, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM), Mexico
- Arizona State University (ASU), USA

Timetable and funding

The project started in 2016 and will run for three years. It is one of three 'Transformative Knowledge Networks' supported by the Transformations to Sustainability Programme, co-ordinated by the International Social Science Council (ISSC), and funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) in partnership with the National Research Foundation of South Africa. The Transformations to Sustainability Programme represents a contribution to Future Earth.

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WHO'S INVOLVED:

SUPPORT & FUNDING:

THE PATHWAYS NETWORK

EXPLORING TRANSFORMATIONS TO SUSTAINABILITY AROUND THE WORLD

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set broad aims for transforming patterns of development towards sustainability. But how can they be realised in different places, settings and cultures?

The Pathways Network is a global project that explores how transformations to sustainability could happen across cultures and disciplines. It forms part of the 'Transformations to Sustainability' programme, which is co-ordinated by the International Social Science Council (ISSC).

In 6 sites around the world, we have set out to research and intervene in processes of transformation, in collaboration with civil society and policy makers. The aim is to discover and create inclusive, practical solutions to key sustainability problems in each place.

THEMES

- Sustainable urban water and waste
- Low carbon energy transitions for the poor
- Sustainable agricultural and food systems for healthy livelihoods

WHERE WE WORK

Work takes place in 6 'hubs' around the world, hosted in academic institutions.

UK Brighton & Hove, a city on the south coast of the UK, has a population of around 275,000. How could small agro-ecological farmers nearby be supported in supplying the city and creating a more sustainable food system?

MEXICO The ecosystem in the wetlands of Xochimilco, Mexico City faces competing pressures from rapid urban growth, tourism, farming and fishing. There are many different views and visions of what should happen. We are exploring how to help people understand the different values and motivations involved, and look for innovative ways forward.

ARGENTINA Seed markets are increasingly controlled by a few large companies, and intellectual property regimes that affect seeds are becoming stricter. This has consequences for biodiversity, food production and social justice. We are exploring how innovations like 'open source' seed systems could meet the needs of farmers and seed companies.

INDIA The Gurgaon region to the South-West of Delhi is undergoing a massive urban transformation under the influence of real estate driven processes of development of urban infrastructure and services. Planning, governance and practices for management of water supply do not take into account the growing inequities and unsustainable water management practices. What kind of public engagement will help create a more just and sustainable water management?

CHINA China's government is urgently pursuing a programme of 'ecological modernisation' that includes cutting carbon emissions and pollution. We are looking at how this has affected workers in the cement industry in Hebei Province, near Beijing, who have lost their jobs. How could such transformations consider these workers and others like them?

KENYA Solar power is gaining popularity as an off-grid source of energy for poor households and small businesses in Kenya. To help with the costs, people can now use a mobile phone-based payment system to access credits and pay for solar home systems over time. Our research is exploring how the mobile-enabled payments can be part of transformations in low-carbon energy systems that can benefit poor people.