

Empowering Early Career Researchers

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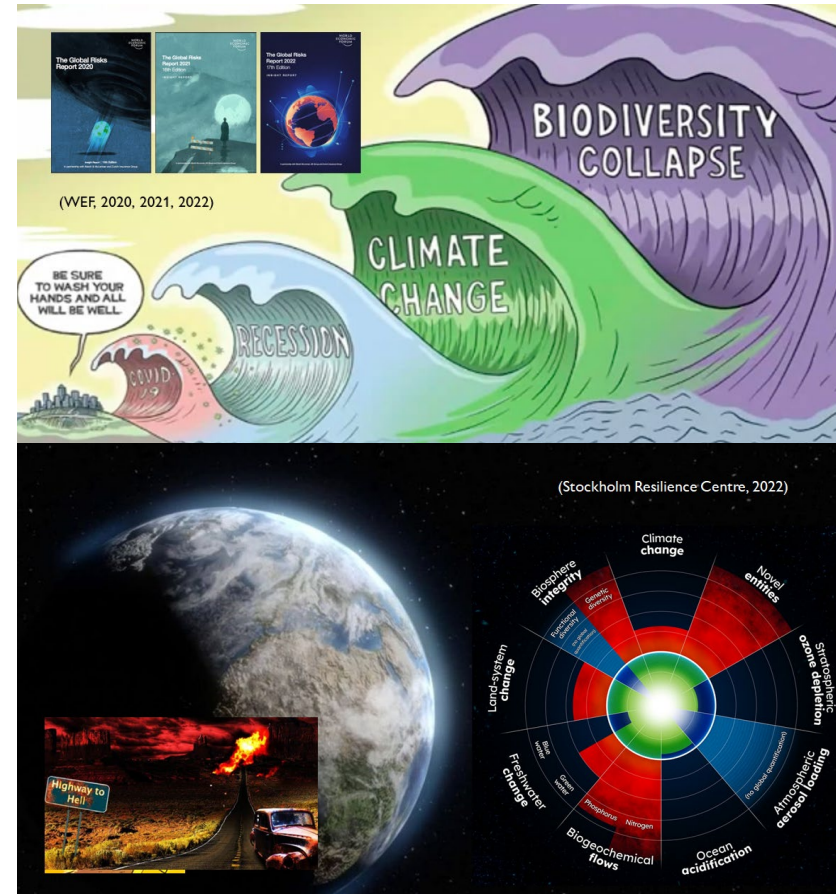
Agenda

- I. Theoretical Background & Insights Into the LEAP Researchers Program
- II. Research Objectives & Methods
- III. Results
- IV. Discussion
- V. The Future of the Program

I. Theoretical Background & Insights Into the LEAP Researchers Program

Rationale: The Need for Early Career Researchers Empowerment

- Multiple and multiplying crises aka grand challenges in today's world (e.g., UNESCO, 2017; WEF, 2023)
- Crucial role of higher education institutions and faculty (Siegel & Dilger, 2023)
- Challenges and uncertainties faced by university instructors (e.g., Hedefalk et al., 2021; McFarlane & Ogazon, 2011)
- Need to develop transformational skills for Sustainable Development (e.g., Inner Development Goals, Jordan, 2021)





Connect and empower young academics from various disciplines
all over the world through a virtual 9-month leadership program
and further develop transformational skills for sustainable
development.

Who are they?

Early career researchers who address sustainability challenges in their research & teaching.

They strive for an economic system which respects the ecosystem's limits and serves society.



oikos LEAP Researchers Program Overview



CORE PARTS

- INTERACTIVE GROUP SESSIONS
- INDIVIDUAL COACHING
- ACTING, PRACTISING

OPTIONAL PARTS

- PEER GROUP CALLS
- SELF STUDYING MATERIALS AND OPTIONAL SESSIONS
- LEAP YOUTH PROGRAMME ELEMENTS OFFER

A photograph of four young people (three women and one man) standing outdoors in a wooded area. They are all smiling and looking towards the camera. The man is on the left, wearing a maroon jacket. The woman next to him has long blonde hair. The woman next to her has long brown hair. The woman on the far right has blonde hair and is wearing a light green hoodie.

LEAP Researchers.

Guiding Framework: Inner Development Goals (IDGs)



(Jordan, 2021)

II. Research Objectives & Methods

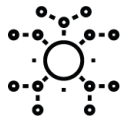
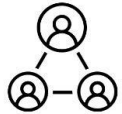
This practice-based research evaluates the 2022 edition of the program and sets the following objectives:

O1: Collect and analyse data capturing participants' transformational skills for Sustainable Development (IDGs Framework).

O2: Identify the program's strengths and weaknesses as well as suggestions for improvements.

Design (Creswell & Plano, 2018)

- **Semi-structured interviews** (approx. 30 min long interviews with the program participants ($N=12$) using an interview guide followed by qualitative content analysis of the transcripts via MAXQDA; Ary, et al. 2019)
- **Formative surveys** (surveys from 5 group sessions, midterm evaluation survey, overall experience survey with 12 participants, combination of open and closed questions)
- **Team evaluations** (qualitative team evaluation after monthly group sessions, final qualitative team evaluation)
- **Joint qualitative evaluation** during strategy meeting held with the program participants (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2016)



Surveys, Team Evaluation, Interviews

2022 LEAP Researchers - overall evaluation

Please take a moment to complete this short survey to share feedback on your experience.

marina.henriques@oikos-international.org [Switch account](#)

Not shared

* Indicates required question

Name (optional) *

Your answer

Overall, how would you grade your experience with the LEAP Researchers program? *

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Not Great ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ AMAZING!

Would you like to briefly comment on the grade you gave in previous question? *

Your answer

How would you grade your experience with the monthly group sessions? *



MAXQDA

Code System

- BLUE COMPETENCIES
- MAGENTA ACTIONS
- GREEN PROGRAM STRENGTHS
- RED PROGRAM CHALLENGES

Interview Guide

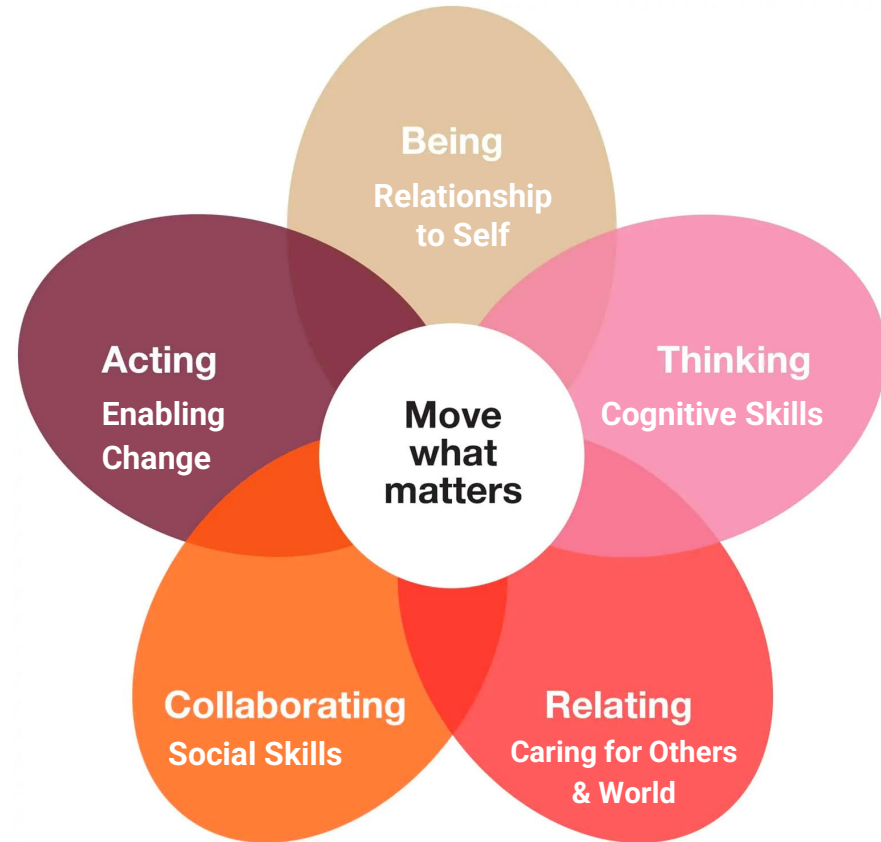
A.Participants develop personal and professional competencies useful for their workplaces:

- 1) What personal competencies did you develop during the LEAP Researchers program? Could you see that you reacted differently in some situations at work thanks to LEAP Researchers? Did it help you overcome certain challenges in a better way?
- 2) Did you acquire or develop professional competencies? Which ones? Were there any situations where you could apply these?

Indicators: participants' feedback during the interview & reflection

III. Results

O1: Transformational Skills for Sustainable Development



Perceived Skill Development	Participants (N=12)	Participants %
Self Awareness	10	83.33%
Openness and Learning Mindset	4	33.33%
Presence	4	33.33%
Critical Thinking	3	25.00%
Appreciation	4	33.33%
Empathy and Compassion	3	25.00%
Communication Skills	4	33.33%
Inclusive Mindset and Intercultural Competencies	3	25.00%
Courage	4	33.33%

01: Typology of Actions Stated by Participants [\(link\)](#)

Area of Actions	Actions	Example
Inner development	Acting with empathy, practising active listening and non-violent communication	<i>"I'm now listening more and allowing others to talk"</i>
Outer development	Join an IDG India Hub, open a new oikos chapter, offer coaching sessions	<i>"I did a coaching session with her and she wrote me to say how much she appreciated it".</i>
Collaborative actions	Engaged in co-creation, peer group facilitation, writing a joint article, joint research project conducting, supporting students	<i>"I liked when we (participants) were actively designing and realizing modules where you could also acquire or use pre-existing competencies".</i>
Institutional change	Improved teaching, challenging the status quo	<i>"[...] next year I will add some elements of sustainability into my teaching".</i>

Collaborations beyond the LEAP Researchers Program

*“This week, Frederik came to St. Gallen to **work together onsite on our joint paper project.**”*

*“Thanks so much for **planting the seeds for this research collaboration and the start of a friendship.**”*

Email from Julia and Frederik, 17. 11. 2023



O2: Program Top Strengths and Challenges

Strengths

1. Coaching (11)
2. Safe space & supportive Community (10)
3. Awareness about values & strengths (8)

Challenges

1. Missing meeting in person (6)
2. Session on research collaboration earlier (5)
3. More cross-pollination e.g., research and methods feedback (4)

O2: Suggestions for Improvement (Implemented) oikos

1. Clear **expectations** & time management
2. Strengthening the sense of **commitment** prior and during the program
3. Stronger emphasis on the **action** part & practise
4. Better methodological and thematic **interconnection** of sessions (IDGs)

IV. Discussion

Research Approach: Strengths & Limitations

Strengths

- Participatory and multi-perspective approach (Ary, et al. 2019)
- Mixed methods design generating multiple sources of evidence (Creswell & Plano, 2018)

Limitations

- Cross-sectional design
- Self-report measures
- Small and selective sample of participants (Ary, et al. 2019)

V. The Future of the Program

LEAP Researchers in 2024

- + Collaboration with UN PRME i5
- + 50 participants across the world
- + Strong globally balanced community
- + Sutra learning platform
- + Onsite meeting offer
- + 2 Co-Program Managers



Call for participants!

LEAP researchers

2024 Call for Participants

*Open
now*



This program aims to combat the skill set development gap that is present in the workforce due to current global challenges including social, economic, and ecological issues by shaping a new style of responsible leader who has the skills to lead more holistically.

Who it is for

Ph.D. students, Masters students, or postdoctoral researchers who:

- address sustainability challenges in their research and/or teaching
- have a high motivation to develop personally and professionally
- have the intrinsic motivation to improve their own understanding of creativity and pedagogy towards the overall pursuit of sustainable development
- have a vision of an economic system that respects ecosystem limits and serves society

Participation is free of charge

4-5h/month March-December 2024

You receive a Certificate after completion

How to join?

Prior to the official application, we would like to virtually meet every potential participant. For that purpose we have organized LEAP Researchers Informational Calls.

Questions?
Feedback?
Comments?



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