

# Leverage Points for Sustainability Transformation: Rethinking knowledge production in a transdisciplinary case

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## The leveraging power of transdisciplinarity

The democratisation of knowledge processes through transdisciplinarity is widely regarded as a promising approach to co-production of transferable solution-oriented knowledge on sustainability problems. By transcending disciplinary boundaries, renegotiating societal roles and integrating different insights, transdisciplinarity is a practical instance of how knowledge co-creation and use can act as a lever for change. Within the 'Leverage Point Project' we understand and apply transdisciplinarity as a mode of working at the science-society interface within the boundaries of a specific case in order to contribute to a sustainability transformation.

## Place-based transdisciplinary research as a transformative practice: the case of Southern Transylvania

The research focus is on the identification, analysis and ground truthing of leverage points within the concrete settings and context of Southern Transylvania. Here, sustainability grassroots initiatives, for example on biodiversity conservation, ecotourism, organic farming, are numerous and locally relevant, but lack in consistency and coordination. Using a knowledge co-production approach, we held workshops to enhance cognitive, communicative, social integration, and balance differences among our partner practitioners, in order to reach an agreement on the framing of the case. The goal of our case-study is to support and enable sustainability transformation processes through co-designing amplifying strategies that increase the reach and impact of pre-existent small-scale local initiatives. We propose a conceptualization of pathway for system change, consisting of three amplifying strategies. We define amplifying strategies as approaches integrating and capitalising on achieved sustainability advancements in order to accelerate system change.

### Amplifying sustainability initiatives and their interconnections

I. Increasing and Scaling	II. Transferring and Adapting	III. Connecting and Complementing
<b>Aim</b> Increasing or scaling up the impact or the reach of an initiative.	<b>Aim</b> Transferring and adapting insights from „success models“ to other fields of application.	<b>Aim</b> Connecting single or groups of initiatives and complementing them to establish collaborations of change.
<b>Example</b> • Supporting single organic farmers to build an association	<b>Example</b> • Transferring governance structures of a farmers association to a newly build tourism association	<b>Example</b> • Bringing organic farmers, organic restaurants and eco tourism together
		

### Based on amplifying strategies building a transformation pathway for reaching the shared vision for Transylvania's future



## Co-creation and reintegration of transformational knowledge

From a conceptual point of view, framing sustainability transformation as scaling, transferring and connecting grassroots initiatives opens questions such as: How can these strategies be specified and operationalized to inform and encourage sustainability transformations in other cases, systems, or disciplinary contexts?

From a concrete point of view we ask: How can these strategies be specified and operationalized to foster sustainability transformation in real-world contexts on a practical level? We envision our collection of amplifying strategies and examples will enable and equip NGOs for a strengthened dialogue with regional and national policymakers and politicians by the end of 2018.

