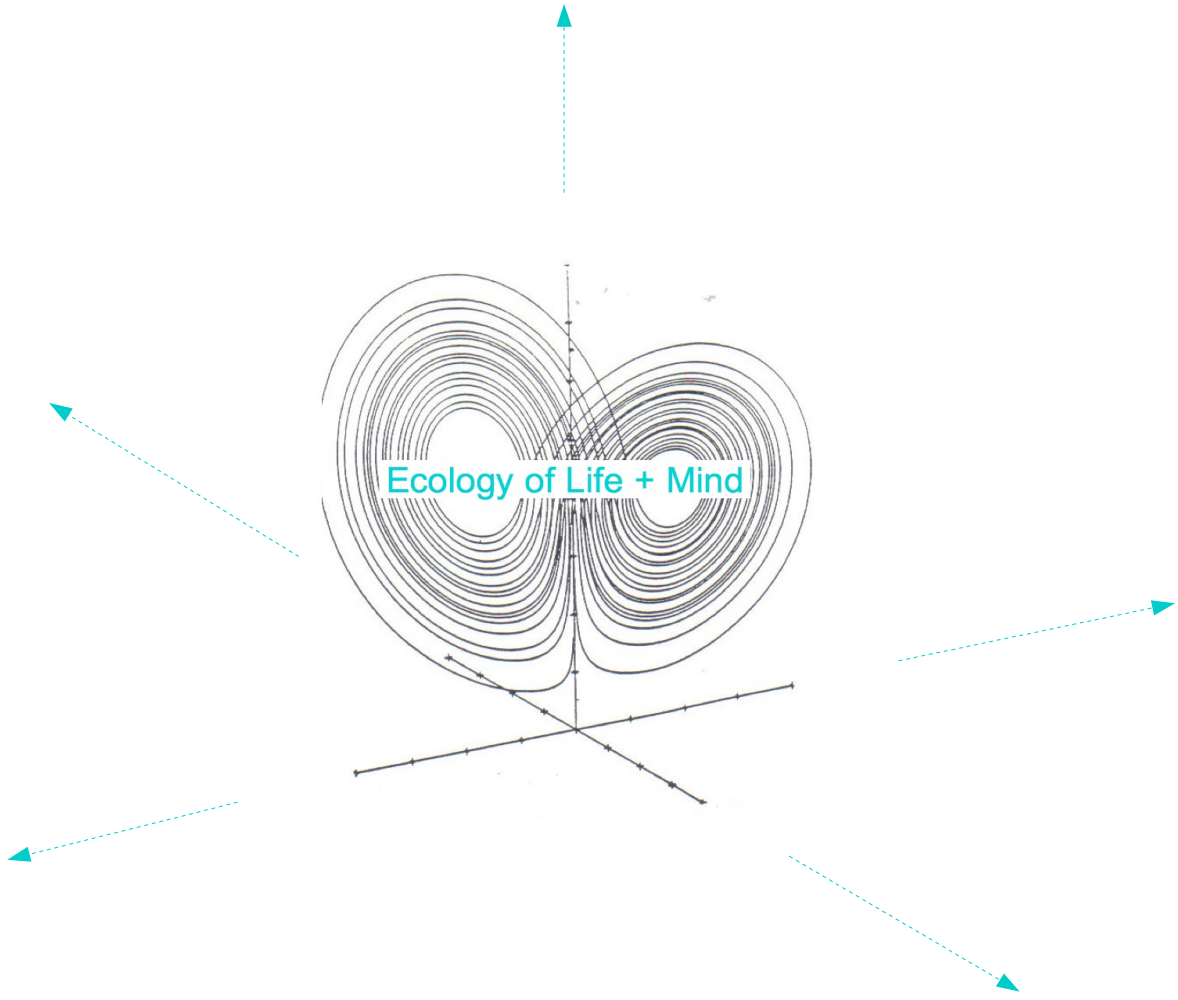
# Towards an Ecology of Life and Mind

*Bridging Being and Doing in Shifting Times*

**Dr. Tho Ha Vinh + Dr. Kai Romhardt**
**+ Prof. Dr. Otto Scharmer + Prof. Dr. Tania Singer**
6th of February 2015 x Forum Factory, Berlin




We are pleased to announce *Towards an Ecology of Life and Mind* (TELM), a one-day event that evolves through four individual positions – from economics to neuroscience, from education to leadership – as we move through interconnected presentations, involving talks, panel discussions, dialogues, and ideas labs. Utilising a transdisciplinary approach, TELM reflects on the disruptive moments and tectonic shifts we are presently experiencing locally and globally. Furthermore, we will contemplate the interrelation between individual transformation and societal innovation as well as between our conception of the human being *(Menschenbild*) and the systems we create. Based on our collective insights we will explore future potentialities and look into ways to translate our ideas into concrete actions.

## [ASPIRATION]

**What characterizes the basic changes and conflicts** of our present times, and how do we create an *Ecology of Life and Mind* that enables us to respond to them in a sustainable way?

**The contemporary landscape of local and global life** is witnessing diverse crises and tectonic shifts in the ecological, economical, social, political, and existential dimensions. From war and terrorism, extreme poverty and hunger, catastrophic climate change and environmental destruction, growing numbers of refugees to the rise in stress-related illnesses such as burnout, depression, anxiety disorders, and increasing suicide rates. Confronted with these challenges, old habitual patterns both on a personal and institutional level need to be questioned and transformed in order to create new possibilities and pathways of being, thinking and doing.

**A much more widespread form of violence** than war and armed conflicts can be described as structural violence that results in socio-economic inequity, with the consequence that 2.5 billion people live under the poverty line. Similarly, a sustainable response towards the present ecological disaster cannot emerge, if there is not a radical shift in the mindset of mankind. Although policies and regulations are essential to redirect development, although national and international leaders and institutions have a central role to play, the actual change can only come about if there is simultaneously a profound transformation of consciousness in everyday life and actions.

## [CONTEMPLATION]

Within this context, we aspire to foster new perceptions of the self/other/world and create prototypes of actions based on the contemplation on the following questions:

+ What are human beings capable of being and doing?

+ What kinds of conception of the human being (*Menschenbild*) need to be developed in order to foster the highest potentiality and creativity of individuals/collectives?

+ Which practices and technologies are available to us today to shape our subjectivity – our thoughts, speech and actions – so that we are capable of embodying the change we aspire to see in the world?

+ With an awareness of our interdependence, how can we build new relationships towards ourselves, others and our environment?

+ How can we create awareness-based action research and learning communities for profound personal transformation and societal innovation?

**[PROGRAMME]**

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|---|---|
| 08:30 AM | Arrival and Registration |
| 09:00 – 09:30 AM | Opening |
| 09:30 AM – 12:00 PM | Talks by Dr. Tho Ha Vinh,<br>Dr. Kai Romhardt,<br>Prof. Dr. Otto Scharmer,<br>Prof. Dr. Tania Singer |
| 12:00 – 01:30 PM | Panel Discussion and Q & A |
| 01:30 – 02:30 PM | Lunch |
| 02:30 – 03:00 PM | Relaxation Session |
| 03:00 – 05:00 PM | Ideas Labs |
| 05:00 – 05:15 PM | Break |
| 05:15 – 06:30 PM | Presentations of each Ideas Lab |
| 06:30 – 06:45 PM | Closing |
| 07:30 PM | Dinner (optional) |

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**[IDEAS LABS]**

1. Community Building + Living
2. Education + Self-/Leadership
3. Mindfulness + Working Culture
4. Presencing + Ecosystem Economics
5. Neuroscience + Compassion
6. Ecology + Community Engagement
7. Social Entrepreneurship + Sustainable Livelihood

The workshops will be led by the speakers in collaboration with people who have expertise in these specific fields.

**[SPEAKERS]**

## + Dr. Tho Ha Vinh / *Program Development Coordinator of the Gross National Happiness Centre in Thimphu/Bhutan*

Tho Ha Vinh is the Program Development Coordinator of the Gross National Happiness (GNH) Centre in Bhutan. He is in charge of setting the learning objectives, developing the curriculum and the learning process both for Bhutanese and international participants.

He has been the Head of training, learning and development at the International Committee of the Red Cross from 2005 to 2011. In this position he has developed and implemented a “People Leadership and Management program” for over 600 mid level managers and 140 senior managers including all the executives of the ICRC. He has trained humanitarian professionals working in war zones and emergency response in Asia, the Middle East, Africa and Europe.

Ha Vinh is the founder and chairman of Eurasia Foundation, a humanitarian NGO developing educational programs for children and youths living with disabilities, as well as ecological projects in Vietnam.
He is a visiting fellow in adult education and humanitarian work in several Universities (Hue/Vietnam, UCL/Belgium, Geneva/Switzerland). His fields of research include: Cognitive and emotional development, social and motivational dimensions of learning, multiple intelligence, contemplative learning practices, interactive learning strategies, biographical dimensions of learning, mentoring and coaching.

Ha Vinh holds a Ph.D . in Psychology and Education from the University of Geneva.

## + Dr. Kai Romhardt / *Founder of the Mindful Business Network*

Kai Romhardt is a Buddhist teacher in the lineage of Thich Nhat Hanh. He founded the German-language ”Mindful Business Network“ and works – beside developing and coordinating the network – as a speaker, author, trainer, and coach

He holds a masters degree in “Management and Organisation” from the University of St. Gallen and a PhD in management and social sciences from the University of Geneva.

After a first career in the field of knowledge management and a short period at McKinsey & Company he spent two years in the Buddhist monastery Plum Village in Southern France, where he studied and practiced under the guidance of Zen-master Thich Nhat Hanh. Inspired by these teachings he „re-entered the world“ and settled in Berlin, where he founded the “Mindful Business Network“ (Netzwerk Achtsame Wirtschaft e.V.) in 2004. In the same year he also founded „Sangha Zehlendorf e.V.“, which he guides together with his wife Bettina, who is also a dharma teacher.

Netzwerk Achtsame Wirtschaft e.V. is now active in 12 towns in the German speaking World offering in 2014 around 130 seminars, retreats, reunions, mindful co-working days, walking meditations, and other events to its members and those interested in applied Buddhism in the realm of business and economics.

Sangha Zehlendorf e.V. is a thriving meditation community and sangha in the tradition of Thich Nhat Hanh with 50 active Members in Berlin.

Kai Romhardt has authored 6 books, including the bestseller „Managing Knowlege“ (Wissen managen, 7th edition, Gabler, 2013) „Slow Down Your Life“ and „Wir sind die Wirtschaft“ (We are the economy).

## + Prof. Dr. Otto Scharmer / *Senior Lecturer at Massachusetts Institute of Technology/Sloan School of Management in Boston/USA and Founder of Presencing Institute*

Otto Scharmer is a Senior Lecturer in Organization Studies at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), Sloan School of Management. Scharmer is the founding chair of ELIAS (Emerging Leaders for Innovation Across Sectors), an initiative focused on developing profound system innovations for a more sustainable world. ELIAS links 20 leading global institutions across the three sectors of business, government, and civil society. He also is a visiting professor at the Center for Innovation and Knowledge Research, Helsinki School of Economics, and the founding chair of the Presencing Institute, a research initiative on developing and advancing social technologies for leading innovation and change.

He chairs the MIT IDEAS programme and helps groups of managers and professionals from business, government and foundations stimulate innovation within their environments. Scharmer has consulted with global companies, international institutions, and cross-sector change initiatives in North America, Europe, Asia, and Africa. He has co-designed and delivered award-winning leadership programs for client organizations, including Daimler Chrysler, Pricewaterhouse Coopers, Google, Natura and Fujitsu.

Scharmer is especially known as one of the founders of the 'Theory U' approach that deals with personal leadership and a different way of thinking. He has further developed this approach with the employees of the former MIT in the past few years. He is the author of numerous articles and books, including *Theory U: Leading from the Future as It Emerges* (2007), *Presence: An Exploration of Profound Change in People, Organizations and Society* (2005), co-authored with Peter Senge, Joseph Jaworski, and Betty Sue Flowers, as well as *Leading from the Emerging Future: From Ego-system to Eco-system Economies* (2013) with Dr. Katrin Käufer.

Scharmer holds an MS and a PhD in economics and management from Witten-Herdecke University, Germany.

## + Prof. Dr. Tania Singer / *Director of the Department for Social Neuroscience at the Max Planck Institute for Human Cognitive and Brain Sciences in Leipzig/Germany*

Tania Singer has published multiple papers on the social brain in high-impact journals such as Science and Nature, and is currently an Advisory Board Member of the Society for Neuroeconomics. Tania investigates the foundations of human social behaviour and, more specifically, the developmental, neural, and hormonal mechanisms underlying social cognition; social moral emotions such as empathy, compassion, envy, and fairness; and emotion-regulation capacities and their role in social decision making and cooperation. To achieve these goals, she uses a multi-method and interdisciplinary approach, where she combines theories, paradigms, and techniques from disciplines as varied as neuroscience, developmental and social psychology, psychobiology, and economics.

After Tania Singer received her Ph.D. in psychology from the Freie Universität Berlin in 2000, which was awarded the prestigious Otto Hahn Medal of the Max Planck Society, she was a Postdoctoral Fellow at the Max Planck Institute for Human Development, Berlin, until 2002.
Tania became a postdoctoral fellow at the Wellcome Department of Imaging Neuroscience, London in 2002 supported by a Leopoldina stipend and at the Institute of Cognitive Neuroscience, London in 2006. Then, she accepted a position as assistant professor (2006-2008) at the University of Zürich and later as Inaugural Chair of Social Neuroscience and Neuroeconomics and Co-Director of the Laboratory for Social and Neural Systems Research.

In 2010 she became a director of the Department for Social Neuroscience at the Max Planck Institute for Human Cognitive and Brain Sciences in Leipzig, Germany. In 2011, she was awarded honorary professorship at the University of Leipzig, Germany, and at Humboldt University, Berlin and is an honorary research fellow at the University of Zurich.

## [REGISTRATION]

Please register **by the 20th of January 2015** by filling out the application form here: http://goo.gl/forms/u6yVYuC1bT

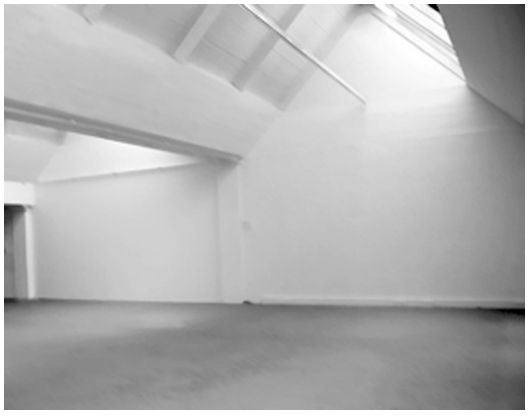
## [ALLOCATION OF PLACES]

The number of participants is **limited to 50 people**. We give preference to young people and students, but do make exceptions, if space is available.

## [PARTICIPATION FEE]

The cost is **35€ per person**. However, finances should not be an obstacle for your participation. If you have sincere financial difficulties, please inform us and we will try our best to provide scholarships.

This is a non-profit event. Your contribution is only to help us cover basic costs (location, catering, traveling expenses and accommodation for speakers).



## [LOCATION]

The symposium will take place in the main space of the *Forum Factory*. The Ideas Labs will take place in individual seminar rooms.

**Forum Factory**
**Besselstraße 13**
**10969 Berlin**

## [ACCOMMODATION]

As this event takes place during the Berlinale, we recommend that you organise accommodation asap. If you have any questions regarding places to stay, please feel free to contact us. We can give you some suggestions.

## [CONTACT]

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact the TELM team via **ecology.life.mind@gmail.com**.

Ecology of Life + Mind

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