

Editorial

Journal of Awareness-Based Systems Change:

The Birth of a Journal

Oliver Koenig, Megan Seneque, Eva Pomeroy, and Otto Scharmer

Responding to Our Global Moment

The launch of this journal happens at a critical juncture of human development: at the global peak of the COVID-19 pandemic and in the midst of an era often framed as the Anthropocene (Crutzen, 2006), a term which highlights human responsibility for the current self-inflicted socio-ecological challenges and wicked problems we collectively face. Launching this first issue of the *Journal of Awareness-Based Systems Change* marks an important milestone on a collective and global learning journey driven by a deeper intention and firm belief that it is possible to address the ecological, social, and inner divides of our time and create results that serve the wellbeing of all. It is born of a desire to support and amplify this intention by providing a platform to make visible and accessible the growing knowledge base that supports societal transformation across these divides through awareness-based systems change. We recognize that we cannot democratize the “know-how” that underlies this work until we can illuminate and

articulate what is happening in deep systems change¹ and how it happens, and then make that knowledge widely available. Thus, research has a key role to play in our collective moment of disruption, transformation, and the renewal of civil society.

Underlying the transformative demand of our current moment is a broader transformative imperative of which we are a part: the need to transform science and social science itself (e.g. Schneidewind et al., 2016; Fazey et al., 2016). As Temper, McGarry & Weber (2019) observe, “the role of science and knowledge production is (...) at a crossroads” (p. 1). Many of our dominant forms of knowledge production with their embedded and established protocols, methods, and discourses stem from an overt western and colonializing focus on rational thought. As Melanie Goodchild points out in this issue, it is out of epistemic violence and ignorance that these forms of knowledge production have themselves contributed to the marginalization and silencing of Indigenous and other forms of knowing that draw from a wider array of complementary epistemologies and (participative) worldviews. Attempts at transforming science in response to intractable global challenges are a feature of many current research initiatives (see, for example, <https://oneoceanhub.org/>). These include disconnected norms and legal frameworks, disconnected science due to limited holistic understanding, and disconnected dialogue across sectors and communities. These contribute both to poor science-policy interface and a lack of consideration of the role of different knowledge systems.

Origins and Intention of the Journal

Even though the intention at the launch of this journal is clear, it’s not the result of a deliberate strategic plan. Rather, the idea for the journal emerged at the inaugural Social Field Summer School, hosted by the Presencing Institute (PI) in Berlin, June 2019. The practices of co-inquiry, dialogue, social art practices, and relationship-building were a core feature of this gathering of researchers, students, artists, practitioners, and academics (those working at the intersections of practice and research) from 23 different countries. Each had responded to an invitation from PI that was both open and bold: to co-initiate a journey, over the course of the next decade, that would foster a global community who would co-develop and evolve the concepts, methods, tools, and frames needed to advance the field of awareness-based systems change. *Awareness-based systems change* is an emergent cross-sectoral, inter- and transdisciplinary field and body of knowing. It draws upon theoretical and practical foundations that

¹ *Deep systems change* implies a shift towards a social field perspective of systems change. This perspective emphasizes the source conditions that give rise to patterns of thinking, conversing, and organizing in systems which, in turn, produce practical results. By including the interiority of the system (first- and second-person experience), a social field perspective addresses the less visible dimensions of social reality creation.

connect awareness-based approaches to individual and collective transformation to effect systems change. Much of the work, especially in this inaugural issue, acknowledges the foundational work of Theory U (Senge et al., 2008; Scharmer, 2016, 2018; Scharmer & Kaufer, 2013, 2015) in shaping and delineating this field.

As became visible to those gathered at the summer school, such an undertaking involves navigating a plethora of tensions and complexities, dealing in parallel with what easily appear to be conflicting rationalities, e.g., the classical question of serving either rigor or relevance, theory or practice, and criticality or creativity. Additionally, many of us involved in this work have traditionally approached it from the edges, be it in relation to our position within (academic) institutions and/or in relation to what constitutes mainstream and legitimized knowledge and practice in our respective disciplines or fields of work. People describe the experience of seeking niches, cracks, or openings that would allow them to position innovative awareness-based practices and frameworks as credible and sustainable approaches to effect systems change. In trying to hold these tensions, rather than seeking to resolve them, the idea of birthing a new journal came to life. As a rigorous *and* relevant, theoretical *and* practical, as well as critical *and* creative response to this challenge, it is the intention of the Journal of Awareness-Based Systems Change to hold and provide a space for a much-needed trans-disciplinary playing field to support and advance systems change.

Absencing and Presencing: Interconnected Phenomena

While in this past year we have witnessed global life-affirming resurgences, such as the Black Lives Matter Movement, this moment also highlights the interconnected relationship between what is referred to in Theory U as Absencing and Presencing. Within this theoretical framework, Presencing and Absencing represent two opposing but interconnected cycles of social-reality creation, and the tension between them “is played out across all sectors and systems of society today” (Scharmer & Käufer 2013, p. 33). While the Presencing cycle sees individuals and collectives attending to the full potential of a present moment and starting to act from a place of deepened awareness and unmediated connection to that field of future possibility, the Absencing cycle leads through a trajectory of rational denial, emotional disconnection, agentic delusion towards—in its worst case—destruction and self-destruction. For Cox (2014), Absencing represents “systemic forms of in-built resistance designed to avoid consciously experiencing and sharing the interpersonal risks inherent in creating a *necessary condition* for this emergence to occur, i.e. creating a conversational field in which our emotional vulnerability to each other is both acknowledged and felt” (p. 30). Including Absencing in our systems change work, requires us to also engage actively with the conflict dimension of transformation and to address issues such as “structural inertia, power, inequality, vested economic interests, denialism,

resistance to change, and anxieties” (Boström et al. 2018, p. 2) that stand at the heart of the wickedness of our current socio-ecological challenges.

As a journal, we are deeply committed to including theoretical accounts and practical examples that intentionally speak to both sides of the Absencing-Presencing spectrum. The intention of our journey is thus multi-fold: We want to support an expanded epistemological approach to research and practice, including the capacity to inform action from a variety of forms of knowing. We aim to further develop the tools, methods, and frameworks to strengthen the capacity in individuals and systems to sense and actualize emerging potentials, and, finally, we are committed to a deeper inquiry into how we can make visible and engage the phenomenon and workings of Absencing in ways that are emancipatory and transformative. In order for these aspirations to be brought to life we are convinced that we need to find ways that allow for a multitude of voices and ways of knowing to come together under one roof, to have diverging views and to explore what this means for our understanding and the practice of awareness-based systems change.

Peer-Reviewed Papers through the Lens of an Expanded Epistemology

Through a variety of formats, we aim to make visible work that is breaking new ground. In doing so, we aim to support the evolution of new knowledge arising from an expanded epistemology that includes cognitive, emotional-relational, embodied, and spiritual-intuitive knowing. Further, this epistemology is derived from, embedded in, and of service to, practice. Each of the original and peer-reviewed articles in this first issue draw from and reflect upon different forms of knowing. Instead of giving a short description of each contribution, we instead want to highlight how multiple epistemologies are deeply interwoven into each of them. To that end, we use Heron & Reason’s (1997) seminal differentiation of propositional, experiential, presentational, and practical knowing as a frame for describing these works:

All peer-reviewed articles in this issue are examples of Propositional knowing, which derives from the mastery of concepts and theories. The articles draw upon and make connections between a wide variety of theoretical bodies and lines of work foundational for a deeper conceptual grounding of awareness-based systems change. Jessica Bockler locates and maps the seven stages of Theory U onto the three core streams of consciousness discussed within transpersonal psychology. Kazuma Matoba grounds the awareness-based approach of Global Social Witnessing within Levinas’ relational philosophy. Ricardo Goncalves & Arawana Hayashi further develop Christopher Alexander’s (1977) ideas of an architectonic pattern language for an embodied, visual, and verbal language for social groups to describe and reflect on social field shifts. Melanie Goodchild utilizes the two-row wampum of the Haudenosaunee as a model of epistemological *non-interference* in cross-cultural research.

Experiential knowing represents our intersubjective sense of being relationally bound to and able to resonate with other persons, but also with other life-giving and affirming (non-human) forces, energies, entities, processes, and things. This form of knowing is also evident in all contributions. In Kazuma Matoba's paper it is our primordial relatedness to the Other which breaks with dominant ideas concerning the autonomous and self-sufficient individual. For Ricardo Goncalves & Arawana Hayashi it is within the feeling of our bodies that we are corporeally and relationally connected, not just to a deeper and holistic embodied wisdom, but also to intangible qualities of our social systems. Jessica Bockler posits that coming into a relationship with and integrating the various deeper, collective streams of consciousness is a prerequisite in becoming more intentionally and co-creatively embedded human beings. Finally, Melanie Goodchild, in reaffirming Indigenous wisdom traditions, highlights the need to address and honor the temporal (the past, the present, and the future), the tangible and intangible (spirit), as well as the living (human and non-human alike) in order to fully arrive at a whole-systems perspective.

Presentational knowing—which stands for the myriad of receptive, expressive, and often artistic spatio-temporal forms and modes of imagery and co-creation in and through which we enact, share, and communicate our sense of connectedness—is also reflected in each article. Jessica Bockler shows how it is through various playful creative and contemplative techniques that we expand and cultivate our ability to notice and express our moment-to-moment experience and shift beyond mere ego-driven modes of functioning. Kazuma Matoba speaks both to the desensitizing but also potentially connecting qualities of media, art, and artifacts to witness and empathize with global social events and, as a result, engage more consciously in pro-social behavior. Through the use of the two-column technique as an expressive and poetic form of cross-cultural communication, Melanie Goodchild confronts us with our own habits of thought and ways of meaning-making and invites us to consciously re-read across the lines to encounter the existence of a multiplicity of ways of doing and interpreting things. Vividly, Ricardo Goncalves & Arawana Hayashi provide us with a fresh aesthetic and immediate, relational language which supports us in describing our seen, felt, and sensed experiences to arrive at wider perspectives from which to base action.

Lastly, all articles capture and contribute to the expansion of our practical and experiential knowing, or knowing-in-action. They support the evolving mastery of practice in concrete and tangible ways across different contexts, fields, cultures, and disciplines working towards systems change. In doing so, they articulate the foundational task of awareness-based systems change to resonate more deeply with our world and exemplify what Scharmer (2019) has called Vertical Transformation Literacy: the ability to shift consciousness from ego-system to eco-system awareness. Shifting to an ecosystem perspective depends on our capacity to consciously draw on and integrate different ways of knowing that enable transformed and future-oriented ways of being, thinking, and doing in service of the wellbeing of all to become reality.

Innovative Formats as Reflection of Our Intention

In addition to original, peer-reviewed articles, you will find other sections and types of submissions in the *Journal of Awareness-Based Systems Change*. The format of the journal is, itself, the result of an intense and unfinished dialogic and iterative process amongst the members of the editorial team and many other collaborators and co-conspirators.² Through the feedback we hope to receive, both from you as readers and through the members of our Editorial Board, we plan to further refine and iterate the journal in the issues to come, with the second of these scheduled for September 2021.

In order to bring our intention to life, we are convinced that we need to ask new kinds of questions and co-inquire into these. Therefore, in addition to the innovative work represented in the articles mentioned above, we introduce new types of contributions here. In this and forthcoming issues, you will find three additional features. In “Commentaries from the field”, we invite renowned scholars and change makers with deep experience working to bring awareness-based approaches to systems change, to make positional or essayistic contributions to the journal. Through these contributions, we aim to make visible the transformational work happening in different contexts and highlight questions and further points of connection that the field of awareness-based systems change needs to further pursue. In this first issue, Vanesa Weyrauch, who is a member of our international and esteemed Editorial Board, draws upon her experience in the field of development work. She describes the current overreliance of funding streams on third-person methods and tools centered on visible processes and measurable outcomes. Further, she shares her experience-based observation that all too often these approaches fall short because they fail to tap deeply enough in the cultural spheres of first- and second-person knowing to address the less visible systemic levels that underlie symptoms.

The second addition is a section we have called “In the Making”. We believe new understandings will surface through emerging patterns which become visible across a range of place-based and viable solutions in diverse fields of research and practice. Even though what had been framed as the post-heroic turn in leadership studies now already dates back more than two decades (e.g., Goleman, 1998), we still see a tendency to present the results and outcomes of initiatives which seek to address complex issues in overtly polished ways. Seldom is the whole story actually told, and also, such ways of showcasing downplay the significance and necessity of individual and collective actors grappling with the

² People who have thus far (apart from the work of the Editorial Team and Editorial Board) contributed to the emergence of the *Journal* in its current form include (in alphabetical order): Sarina Bouwhuis, Jayne Bryant, Kely Bird, Kirsi Hakio, Lukas Herrmann, Els Laenens, Uri Noy-Meir, Keira Oliver, Rebecca Paradiso de Sayu, Monique Potts, Javier Ruiz, Janice Spadafore, Godelieve Spas, John Stubbley, and Katie Stubbley.

messiness inherent in coming to terms and making sense in and out of complexity. We believe this is another important necessity of our time and moment: to collectively explore the process of transformation from an awareness-based perspective in ways that make the sense- and meaning-making process visible. We invite researchers and practitioners to share ideas as work is in progress and invite commentary, thus moving the transformation process ‘in front of the curtain’. In this first issue Eva Pomeroy, Lukas Herrmann, Sebastian Jung, Els Laenens, Laura Pastorini, and Angelique Ruitter describe their role as embedded researchers in the Presencing Institute’s GAIA initiative and propose a framework which integrates relational, intuitive, and aesthetic forms of knowing in order to equally serve action in emergent processes, as well as generate widely applicable knowledge. Instead of an anonymized peer-review process, each “In the Making” will be paired with a discussant, speaking equally to the authors and the intention of the contribution, as well as pointing towards further potential points of connection for a larger audience. As a discussant for this first issue, Patricia Wilson reaffirms and encourages the author collective to further thicken and enrich their descriptions around the aspect of holistic and intuitive intersubjective second-person knowing and points towards a model to incorporate a broader and post-positivistic understanding of validity in action research.

Lastly, we introduce the section “In Dialogue”. The *Journal of Awareness-Based Systems Change* believes in the importance of exemplifying the essence of generative dialogic practice: surfacing tacit knowledge and making assumptions visible within a community of co-inquirers. As such, the final format will showcase forms of collective co-inquiry into foundational questions and key aspects of awareness-based systems change within and across related approaches and fields in and through the practice of Dialogue. In this issue, founding faculty of the Presencing Institute who co-shaped the tools and practices that form the foundation of Theory U are invited to dialogue by Julie Arts & Angela Baldini. They describe the origins of key sensing practices and explore the inner experience of holding them that is at the root of their effectiveness as awareness-based systems change tools.

We subtitled this editorial “the birth of a journal”. Whilst the process of giving birth to this first offspring took a while longer than the human nine-month cycle, we feel nonetheless proud to now officially introduce it to a larger audience. We invite you to allow the different formats of this journal to engage your open mind, open heart, and open will alike, and to join with us in our collective inquiry into the tensions and promises of awareness-based systems change as a way to respond to the planetary emergency of our time by activating, rather than disabling, the full potential of human agency and ecosystem wellbeing.

References

- Boström M., Andersson, E., Berg M., Gustafsson, K., Gustavsson, E., Hysing, E., Lidskog, R., Löfmarck, E., Ojala, M., Olsson, J., Singleton, B.E., Svenberg, S., Ugglå, Y., Öhman, J (2018). Conditions for transformative learning for sustainable development: A theoretical review and approach. *Sustainability*, 10(12):4479. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su10124479>
- Cox, L. D. (2014). Presenting our absencing: A collective reflective practice using Scharmer's "U" model. In O. Gunnlaugson (Ed), *Perspectives on Theory U: Insights from the Field: Insights from the Field* (pp. 29-47). IGI Global. DOI: 10.4018/978-1-4666-4793-0.ch003
- Crutzen, P. J. (2006). The "anthropocene". In E. Ehlers & T. Kraft (Eds.), *Earth system science in the anthropocene* (pp. 13-18). Springer.
- Fazey, I., Schöpke, N., Caniglic, G., Patterson, J., Hultman, J., van Mierlof, B., Säwee, F., Wiek, A., Wittmayer, J., Aldunce, P., Al Waer, H., Battacharya, N., Bradbury, H., Carmena, E., Colvink, J., Cvitanovic, C., D'Souza, M., Gopel, M...Wyborn, C. (2018): Ten essentials for action-oriented and second order energy transitions, transformations and climate change research. *Energy Research & Social Science*, 40, 54-70. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.erss.2017.11.026>
- Goleman, D. (1998). *Working with emotional intelligence*. Bantam.
- Heron, J., & Reason, P. (1997). A participatory inquiry paradigm. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 3(3), 274–294. <https://doi.org/10.1177/107780049700300302>
- Scharmer, O. (2019, April 16). *Vertical literacy: Reimagining the 21st-century university*. Field of the Future Blog. <https://medium.com/presenting-institute-blog/vertical-literacy-12-principles-for-reinventing-the-21st-century-university-39c2948192ee>
- Scharmer, O. (2018). *The essentials of Theory U: Core principles and applications*. Berrett-Koehler Publishers.
- Scharmer, C. O. (2016). *Theory U: Learning from the future as it emerges*. (2nd ed.) Berrett-Koehler Publishers.
- Scharmer, O. & Kaufer, K. (2015). Awareness-based action research: Catching social reality creation in flight. In H. Bradbury (Ed.). *The SAGE Handbook of Action Research*, 3rd ed. (pp. 199-210). SAGE. <https://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781473921290.n20>
- Scharmer, C. O., & Kaufer, K. (2013). *Leading from the emerging future: From ego-system to eco-system economies*. Berrett-Koehler Publishers.
- Schneidewind, U., Singer-Brodowski, M., Augenstein, K., & Stelzer, F. (2016). *Pledge for a transformative science: A conceptual framework* (No. 191). Wuppertal papers.
- Senge, P. M., Scharmer, C. O., Jaworski, J., & Flowers, B. S. (2008). *Presence: An exploration of profound change in people, organizations, and society*. Doubleday
- Temper, L., McGarry, D., & Weber, L. (2019). From academic to political rigour: insights from the 'tarot' of transgressive research. *Ecological Economics*, 164, 106379. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecolecon.2019.106379>

Commentary from the Field

Questions as a Lighthouse:

How This Journal Can Contribute to New Ways Forward in the Development Field

Vanesa Weyrauch

Purpose & Ideas

v_weyrauch@politicsandideas.org

When I received an invitation to be part of the Editorial Board of this journal, I celebrated its promising and much-needed birth. I have worked for the past 20 years in the field that promotes a better interaction between evidence and policy, including work with think tanks, national and international NGOs, universities and government agencies, particularly in Latin America, but also in Africa, Eastern Europe and Asia.

As a result of these experiences, I arrived at the conclusion that development initiatives that have prioritized rational approaches to change have failed to solve complex problems. It is true that we have made advances in development: on average, we live longer, have higher salaries, are better educated, and have more political stability than ever before. However, we have failed to build the leadership and institutions that can address wicked problems under pressure and at scale. The investment in infrastructure so far is relevant but not sufficient to develop and build systems of high capacity (Andrews et al., 2017).

Unfortunately, we see that many countries are still not able to perform some of their basic functions for the benefit of their citizens. Once a country is stuck, to continue doing what has been done in the past won't work. Or as Einstein so

clearly stated: “We cannot solve our problems with the same level of thinking that created them”. The need to revisit our theories and practices to enable change is evident, even when funders continue to support projects that deliver the same type of results due to the same type of approaches. One of the main challenges is that projects focus solely on the symptoms (poverty, inequality, environmental disasters, etc.) and do not go deeper to explore the causes of those symptoms, which are what this journal calls “the deeper structures of the social systems—the source conditions—in order to see, sense and shift them.”

So, how can we go deeper and generate a new operational system? This is not at all easy. It implies taking risks and embracing uncertainty. My organization, P&I, was born in 2012 as *Politics & Ideas*: a joint initiative of researchers and practitioners to co-produce and share innovative knowledge and support evidence-informed public policies for the wellbeing of all. By the end of 2019, based on what we learned by working with diverse stakeholders in the evidence and policy ecosystem, we decided to expand our focus and complement our existing research and knowledge creation with other ways to generate ideas that can inspire new actions for the good of all, including awareness-based approaches. Thus, in 2020 we re-founded ourselves as *Purpose & Ideas*. We are convinced it is time to further explore approaches that integrate the body and heart and mind to collectively frame problems and co-create solutions towards sustainable wellbeing for our communities. However, to tell others stakeholders why and how we plan to work differently—from our inner source—is a highly challenging task. We believe the path would be smoother if we were able to support, with more evidence of its effectiveness, the type of work and approaches we are trying to promote.

During the last two decades of work, members of P&I have encountered several wicked problems while supporting think tanks and government agencies in their efforts to transform their organizations in order to contribute to better public policies through the use of research-based evidence. However, most of the strategic, monitoring, and evaluation plans that we co-developed fell short of their original intentions—despite being based in thoughtful and elaborate approaches and emerging from real group work and consensus. Further, as contractors, we found it challenging to engage in honest discussion with funders about failure, which is critical for experimentation, as funders typically reward only success stories and withdraw funding from ‘failures’ (Woolcock and Bridges, 2019).

Why was that happening? We decided to try and understand this a bit better. To that end, in 2016, we partnered with INASP, an international development organization based in the UK, to co-create a systemic framework called “Context Matters”, which is a participatory tool to help detect and understand the best entry points for improving the use of knowledge in public agencies. This framework builds on the experience of 50+ policymakers and practitioners and has been piloted with government agencies in Peru and Ghana and international non-governmental organizations such as UNICEF. With this

tool, we aimed to look both at the organization itself (internal factors) and the broader political economy (external factors) that can affect the use of knowledge in policy decisions. It addresses visible changes, such as new processes, policies and behaviours, and invisible changes, such as shifts in motivation, attitudes, and overall culture around knowledge use.

However, when trying to apply the tool with teams across the world, we find that the preferred solutions and approaches to deal with change focus primarily on the use of the mind and rational and linear approaches. Delving into personal and cultural change that taps into how an organization, a team, or a person perceive themselves and their values is regarded as a long-range effort that usually falls outside the scope of concrete short-term funded projects. Thus, the change plans that resulted from these processes were centered in visible activities and processes that coordinators and managers could develop and measure. Or as put by Wilber and Watkins (2015), the chosen way is to focus on “it” solutions: those that can be objectively seen and measured. But the challenges faced are not so easy to identify, they are invisible and mostly belong to our individual and collective internal dimensions. Hence, outer transformation should be underpinned by inner transformation. To become aware of and change *the inner place* from which we operate, we need to integrate mind, body and heart. In Scharmer’s (2016) words, “it’s not only *what* leaders do and *how* they do it, but their ‘interior condition,’ that is, the inner place from which they operate—the source and quality of their attention.”

Thus, we are eager to co-produce, receive, and apply research-based evidence, and to foster global discussions on how cultivating the interior condition through awareness-based systems change approaches, such as Theory U under the Presencing Institute, Reinventing organizations by Frederic Laloux, and The Conscious Business approach by Peter Matthies, can contribute to innovative ways of addressing challenges in development projects. In that sense, we believe that this journal has significant potential to systematize and make more visible and accessible the knowledge needed to promote systemic change in a conscious way.

We have a couple of key questions that could guide our inquiry going forward:

- How can the potential of mind be expanded by also including the heart and body to define development problems and co-create collective solutions?
- How are leaders of development projects currently using awareness-based systems change approaches to tackle development challenges?
- How have these approaches tangibly contributed to positive results in development projects? Can this be better and further monitored and evaluated?

- Could development players revisit current theories of change (and theories on how monitoring and evaluation is applied) by incorporating these types of approaches?

Even though awareness-based systems change approaches are increasingly generating interest and respect among think tanks, government agencies, and funders, there is more work to do to make a stronger case for how they can contribute to a radically new way of thinking so that we do not end up with the same results. To inspire the development community to try out awareness-based approaches, I believe we need to generate promising and solid changes at the level of knowledge, awareness, interest, and behaviours in our field. Some of these changes could be:

- Generation of novel evidence demonstrating how integrating mind, body, and heart can lead to valuable and sustainable outcomes in development projects.
- Increased awareness of why we need to expand the potential of the mind in the way we define problems and collectively produce potential solutions.
- Informed debates on the current challenges and limitations of traditional approaches to development projects and the potential contribution of awareness-based systems change methods and theories.
- New relationships among key stakeholders who seek to try these approaches, that go beyond rational and technical solutions, on recurrent challenges.
- An emergent community of development stakeholders interested in supporting awareness-based approaches for development projects.
- New beliefs and attitudes among a new generation of leaders who want to think and act differently in development.

In 2020, the level of uncertainty and not knowing brought by COVID have paved the way to the emergence of new voices and approaches that have been underestimated or neglected for a long time. 2021 is just starting and holds the promise of using what we have learned and what we still need to learn as a lighthouse to guide us forward. A new world may emerge from these critical and tumultuous times. This journal has the potential to shed light onto this promise and make new ways forward more accessible to those who have been waiting for them.

References

- Andrews, M., Pritchett, L. & Woolcock, M. (2017). *Building state capability: Evidence, analysis, action*. Oxford Scholarship Online.
- Scharmer, C. O. (2016). *Theory U: Learning from the future as it emerges*. (2nd ed.) Berrett-Koehler Publishers.
- Watkins, A. & Wilber, K. (2015). *Wicked & wise: How to solve the world's toughest problems*. Urbane Publications.
- Woolcock, M. & Bridges, K. (2019). *Implementing adaptive approaches in real world scenarios: A Nigeria case study, with lessons for theory and practice*. World Bank Group.