

Exploring coherence

Presenting the work and overall results of the Cohere+ Project

IFIS Kolloqium - June 2025

Dr. Bettina Geiken



EKSKÅRET



Co-funded by
the European Union

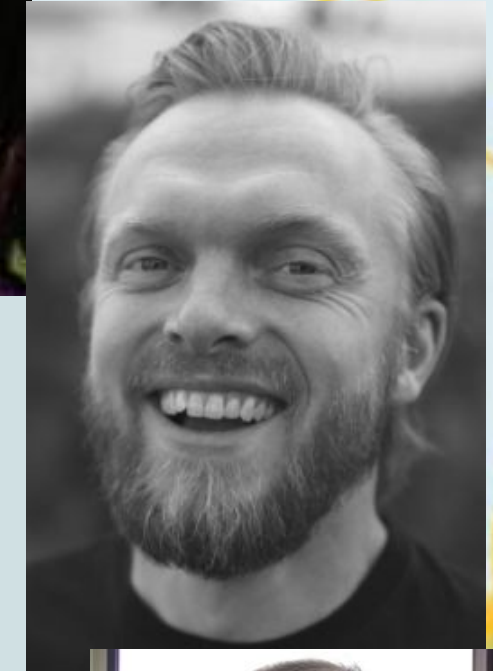


© 2025 by Dr. Bettina Geiken/Cohere+

Cohere +

Who we are

- Erasmus+ Collaboration Partnership (2022-2025)
- 5 partners from 4 countries:
 - The Hague Center for Global Governance (NL)
 - Institute for integral Studies (IFIS, DE)
 - Life Itself (F), Emerge (DE), Ekskäret (SE)





Purpose and Focus of Cohere+

The **purpose** of this 3-year project (**Erasmus+, 2022–2025**) is

- to enhance the collective capacities of European change agents and
- learn and move together towards a regenerative, cohesive, and healthy Europe.

Our **focus** is on the field of "**paradigmatic**" **change agents** in Europe: those who can be identified as taking **whole-systems, integrative approaches towards paradigmatic societal transformation**.

Cohere+ combines **research, events, technology development, and educational offerings**



What Is Coherence ?

Coherence comes from the Latin *cohaerere*, meaning *connected, consistent, harmonious*. Across disciplines—from physics to psychology to complexity science—coherence reflects a **dynamic state of alignment, order, and resonance** within and between systems.

Working

A state of harmony and alignment where all parts of a system work in sync to support both the whole and the freedom and efficiency of its parts in order to actualize its goals.

Definition:



What Is Coherence ?

Three Levels of Coherence (HeartMath Institute):

- **Personal Coherence**

Alignment of heart, mind, and body—enhancing self-awareness, resilience, creativity, and intuitive decision-making.

- **Social Coherence**

Shared alignment in groups and communities—fostering trust, collective intelligence, and emotionally safe collaboration.

- **Global Coherence**

Recognizing and nurturing the interconnectedness of all life—promoting compassion, cooperative behavior, and planetary well-being.



The unfolding into coherence – “Coherence as a process”

- Coherence as a dynamic state: alignment with the flow of life's energy
- Stages: from anxiety to exploration
- "Agency" (Act as individual and as collective) is what coherence makes possible/fosters AND vice versa
- Integration of difference: subgrouping, presencing and resonance



The dynamic process of “Coherence in Practice”

- **Coherence is not static**—it’s a **meta-stable process** maintained through intention, trust, authenticity, and “tension skills.”
- It thrives on **diversity and productive irritation**, which help systems reorganize for deeper alignment.
- It can be **scaffolded** through:
 - Art and aesthetic experience
 - Safe, facilitated spaces
 - Practical tools and group interventions
- These practices extend **agency beyond meetings**, building lasting personal and social coherence.
- **Coherence deepens transformation AND vice versa**

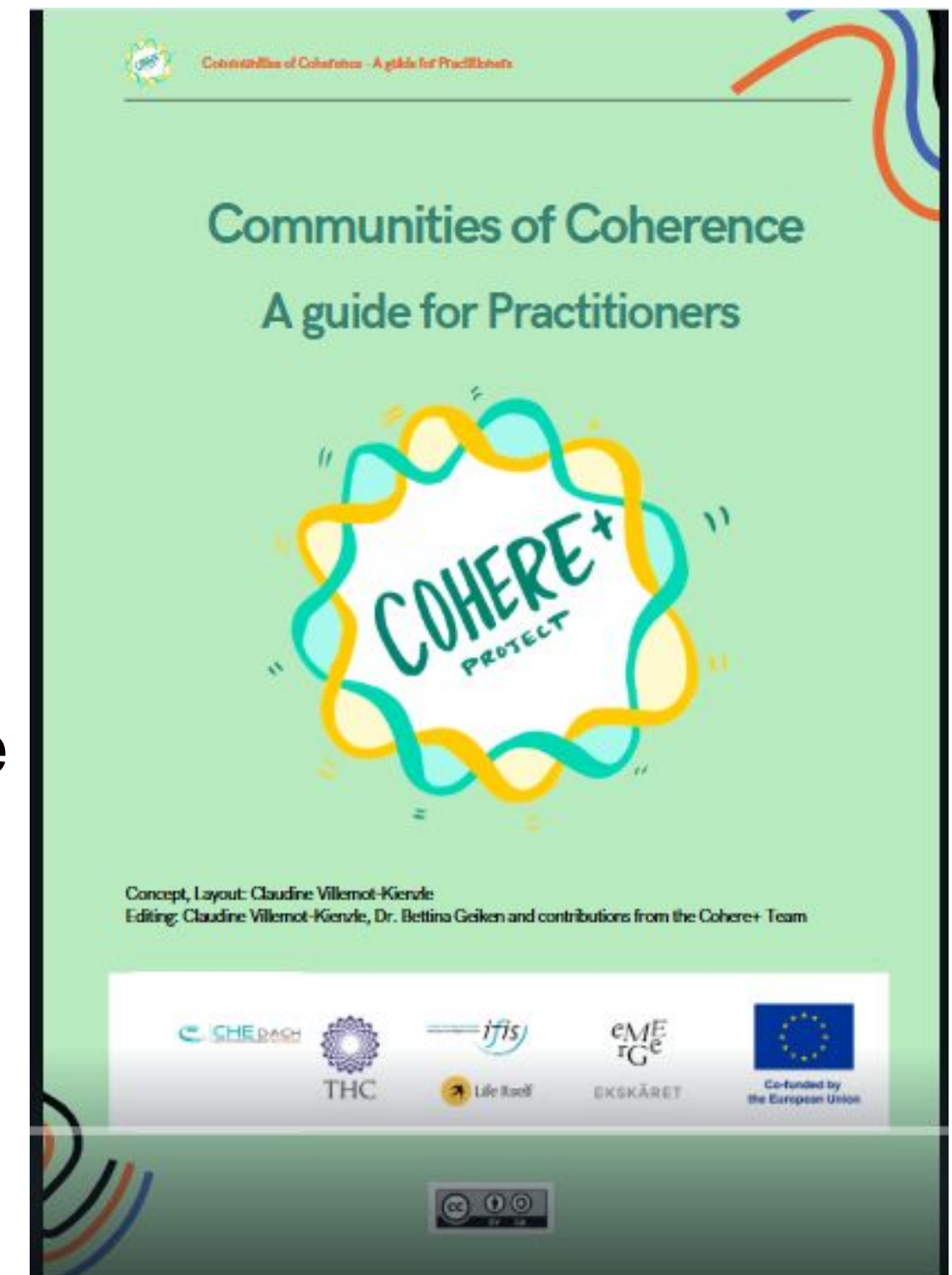


**Our results after 3 years of “delightfully”
working together**

Communities of Coherence Guide – Summarizes everything :–) (THC&IFIS)

In the guide we explore the

- **nature of coherence, its potential and its meaning**
- **factors that support or prevent coherence in**
- We offer **tools and practices** to build and expand capacity in consciously designing for the manifestation of coherence.
- We give **inspiration and impulses** how to actively create “**islands**” or “**communities of coherence**”



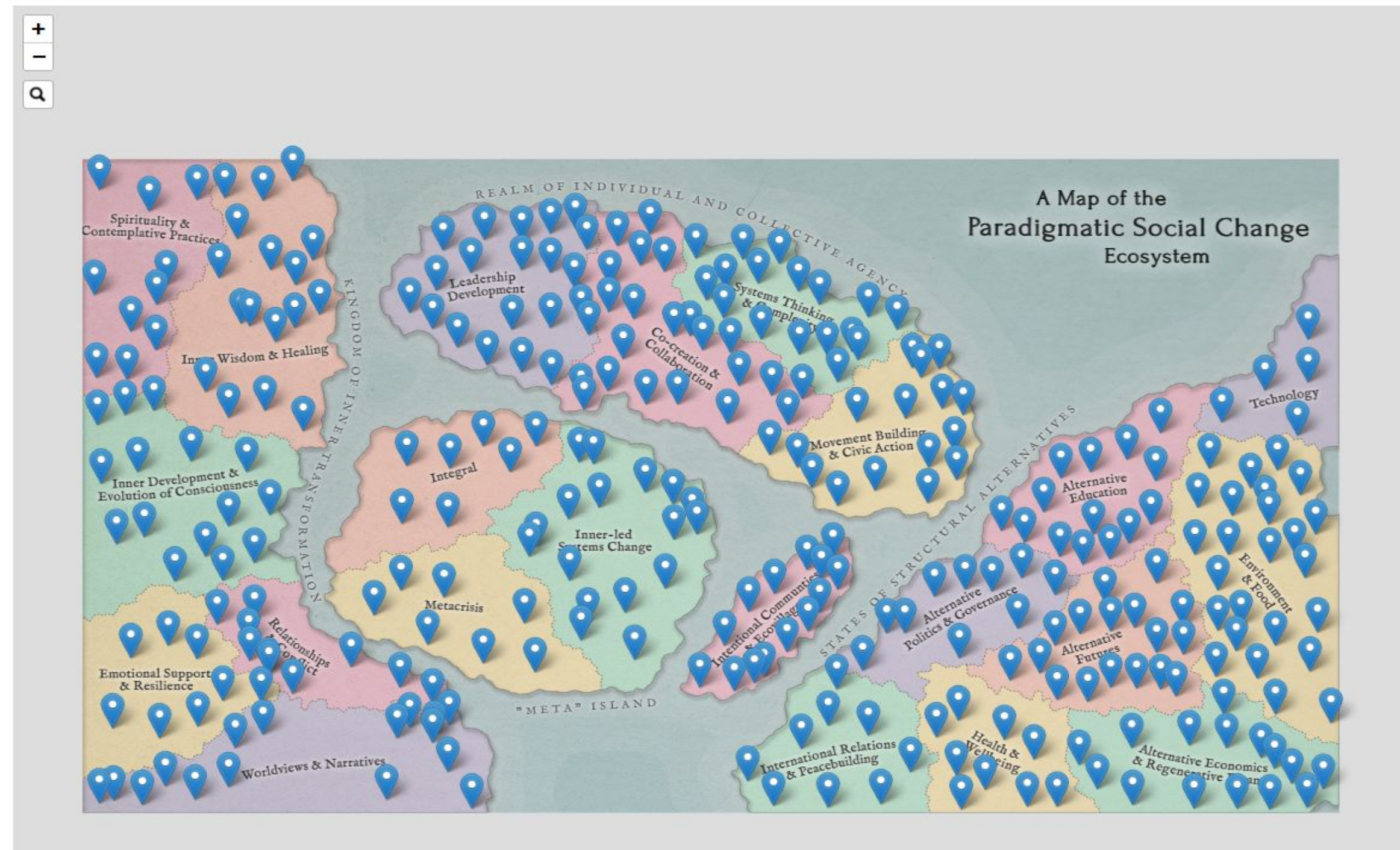
Mapping the Field (Life Itself) – 300 organisations

Second Renaissance

[Whitepaper](#) [Art](#) [Ecosystem](#) [Course](#) [Wiki](#) [Events](#) [About](#) [News](#) [Chat](#)

Map of "Second Renaissance" Ecosystem

Explore the map of organizations, communities, and initiatives who are taking action towards paradigmatic social change in Europe.





“Gap Analysis Report” – Emergent Power

Understanding Key challenges and capacities of change agents (Life Itself)

What inner capacities do change agents in the emerging ecosystem need to develop so that the ecosystem becomes more powerful and better able to contribute to life-serving socio-ecological transformation?

3 Key ecosystem-level challenges

1. Developing healthy relational cultures
2. Cultivating emergent ways of working together
3. Reckoning with dominant cultural paradigms

6 Key “capacities for the future”

1. Ease with uncertainty and complexity
2. Critical inquiry into existing mental structures
3. Addressing reactivity, tension, and conflict
4. Agency and capacity to implement vision
5. Acting in service of the greater whole
6. Collective inner resourcing

Examples of essays identifying capacity building tools + Recent profiles of key actors (EMERGE)



THE TROUBLE WITH PARTICIPATIVE GROUP PROCESSES

Anne Caspari

In case of emergence, don't call a facilitator



Kateryna Yasko

Leigh Biddlecome

Collective Bildung for Ukraine



Sensing coherence from the fringes

Leigh Biddlecome

AN INTERVIEW WITH ANNE CASPARI



Dissonance, Resonance, and the
'Interface problem'

Leigh Biddlecome

Nathan Vanderpool, Part II



Towards a systemic investing approach
for wisdom infrastructure

Nico (Nicolas) Michaelson

What if we invested in wisdom cultivation like we
do in cities and infrastructure?



FINDING COHERENCE IN 'STEADY
STATE RESONANCE'

An interview with Engin Ayaz

COHERE+ — 2.7.2025

The full list of all essays and profiles by EMERGE can be found [here](#)

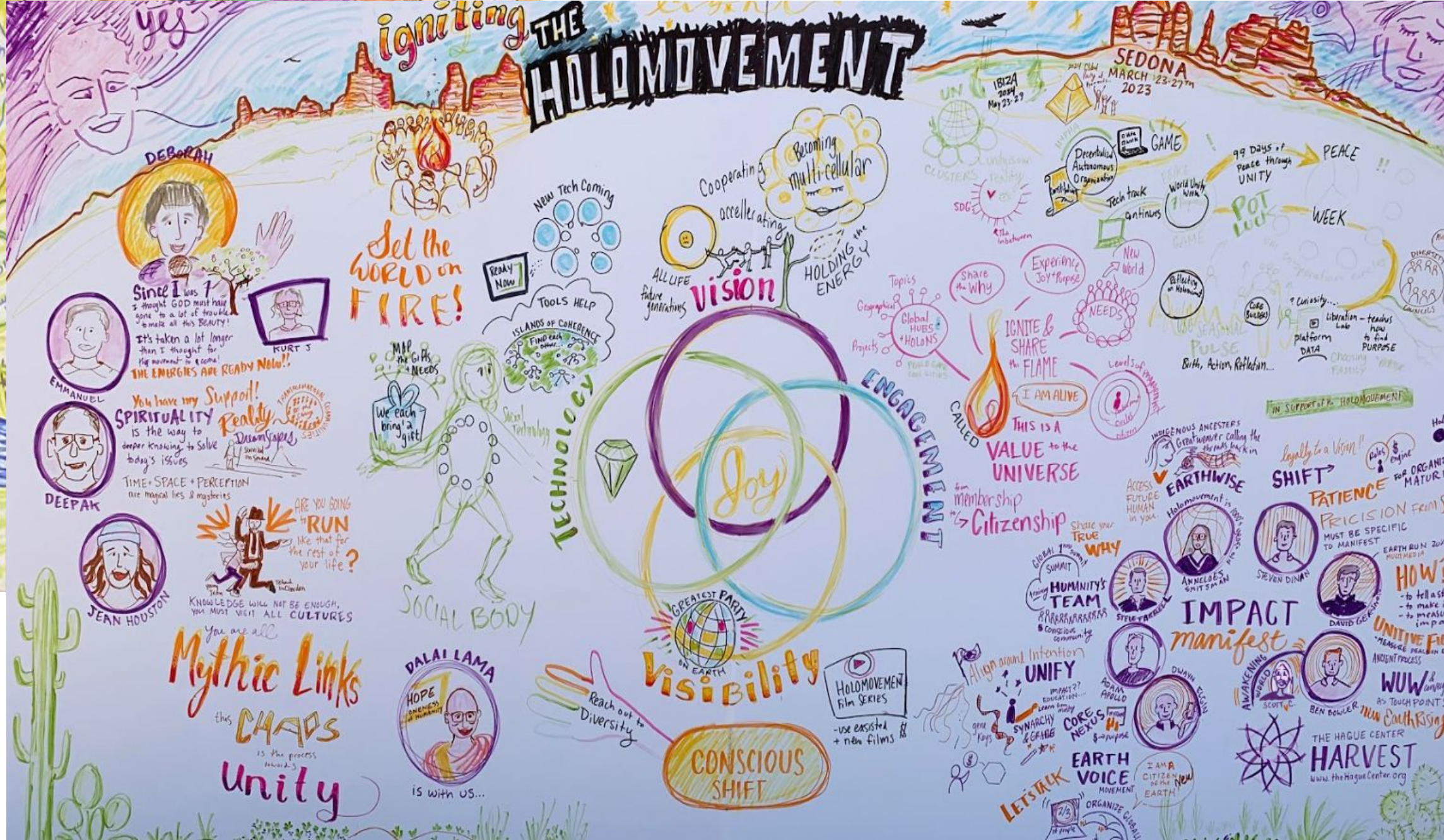
Strategic relationship building

3 Summits - IDG & Holomovement (Emerge, Ekskäret, THC, IFIS)

Cohere+ was co-convening in **3 international summits**, offering specific workshops around **action research & coherence building** within networks and hubs

- 2023 - IDG Summit Stockholm (Ekskäret & Emerge)
- 2024 - Holomovement Gathering Ibiza (THC & IFIS)
- 2024 - IDG Summit Stockholm (Ekskäret & Emerge)





Co-creative gatherings, citizen dialogues and integral political salons (IFIS)

IFIS has been offering Learning spaces and journeys for **building capacities for coherence**

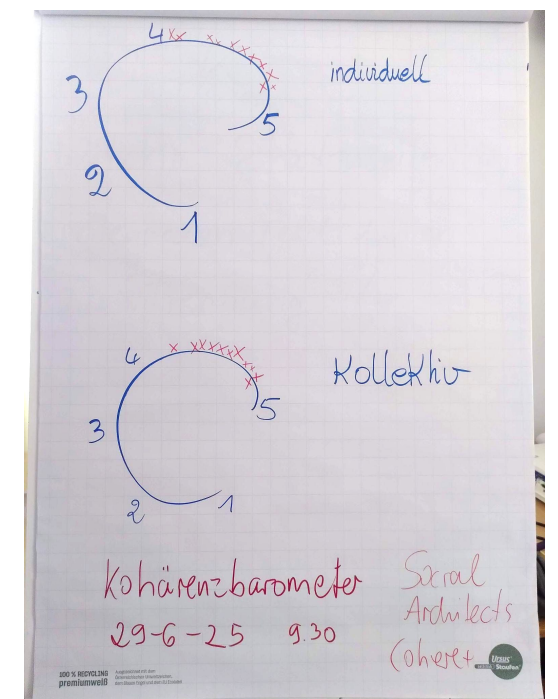
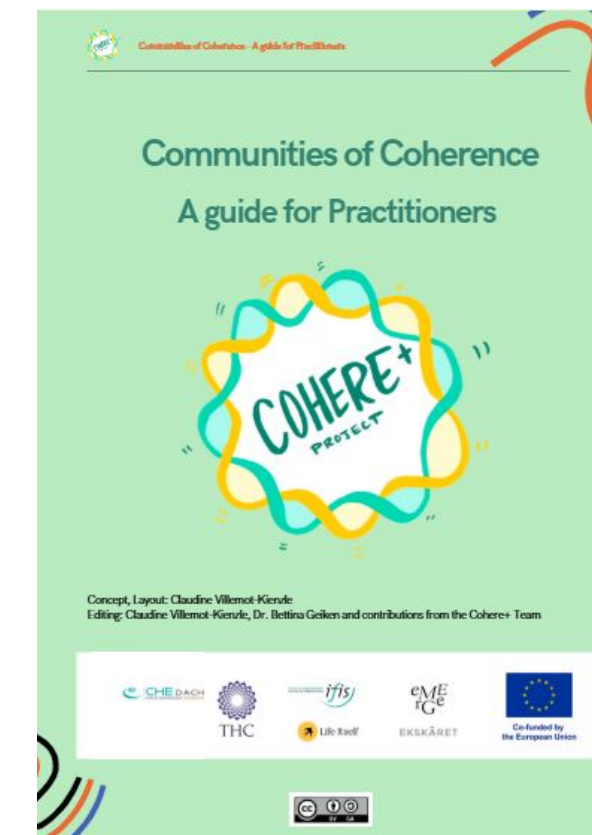
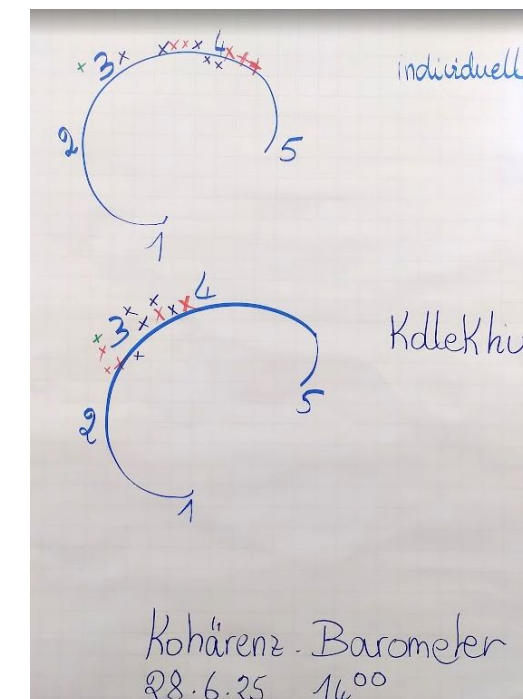
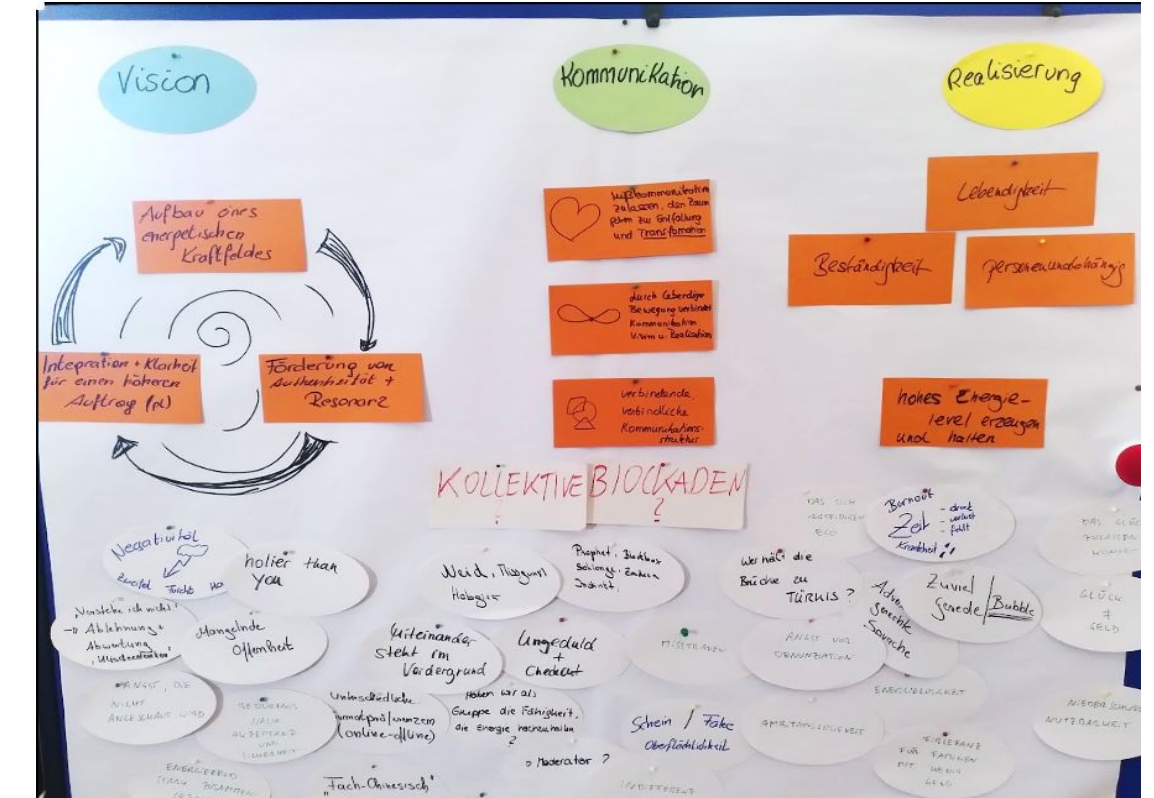
- has held numerous **co-creative gatherings, political salons** (in-person and online).
- **hosted more than 6 dialogues “Beyond polarisation”** in collaboration with Aktion Brückenschlag
- organised more than **6 round tables for citizens** in Freiburg Area
- will have published **36 blog articles** at the end of the project
- energized the **IDG book chapter “Deepcasting the IDGs”**
- developed the **conceptual design and structure** of the Cohere+ learning journeys

A summary of activities can be found [here](#)



Design for Onsite course: Co-creating Coherent Social Architectures

- Associate partner “Center for Human Emergence DACH” offered to **test** a new coherence based workshop **design**
- Related to **collective skills** for co-creating coherence social architectures
- Based on the taxonomy, research and learning journeys design of the **Cohere+ project**
- Focus on creating “communities of coherence”
- **Real-life test** as part of their “Social Architect Training”
- incl. regular **Coherence barometer assessment** during 2 days workshop

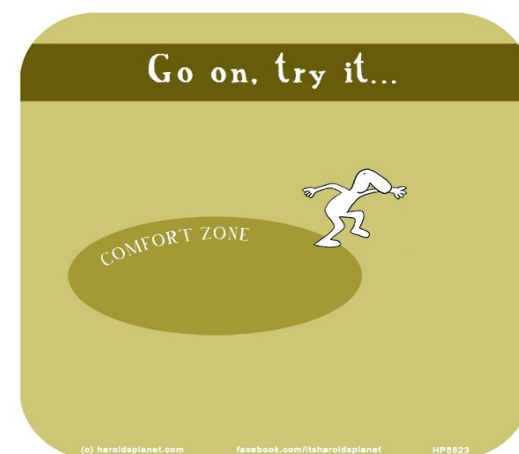


Developing (Online - Live) Module of Learning Journey - Body-Mindedness as basis for inner coherence

IFIS developed the **practice seminar on Body-Mindedness**, as a basic module to **enhance personal coherence** and **build a regular practice**

3 Online - Live sessions, with extensive practicing and tracking of insights in between sessions.

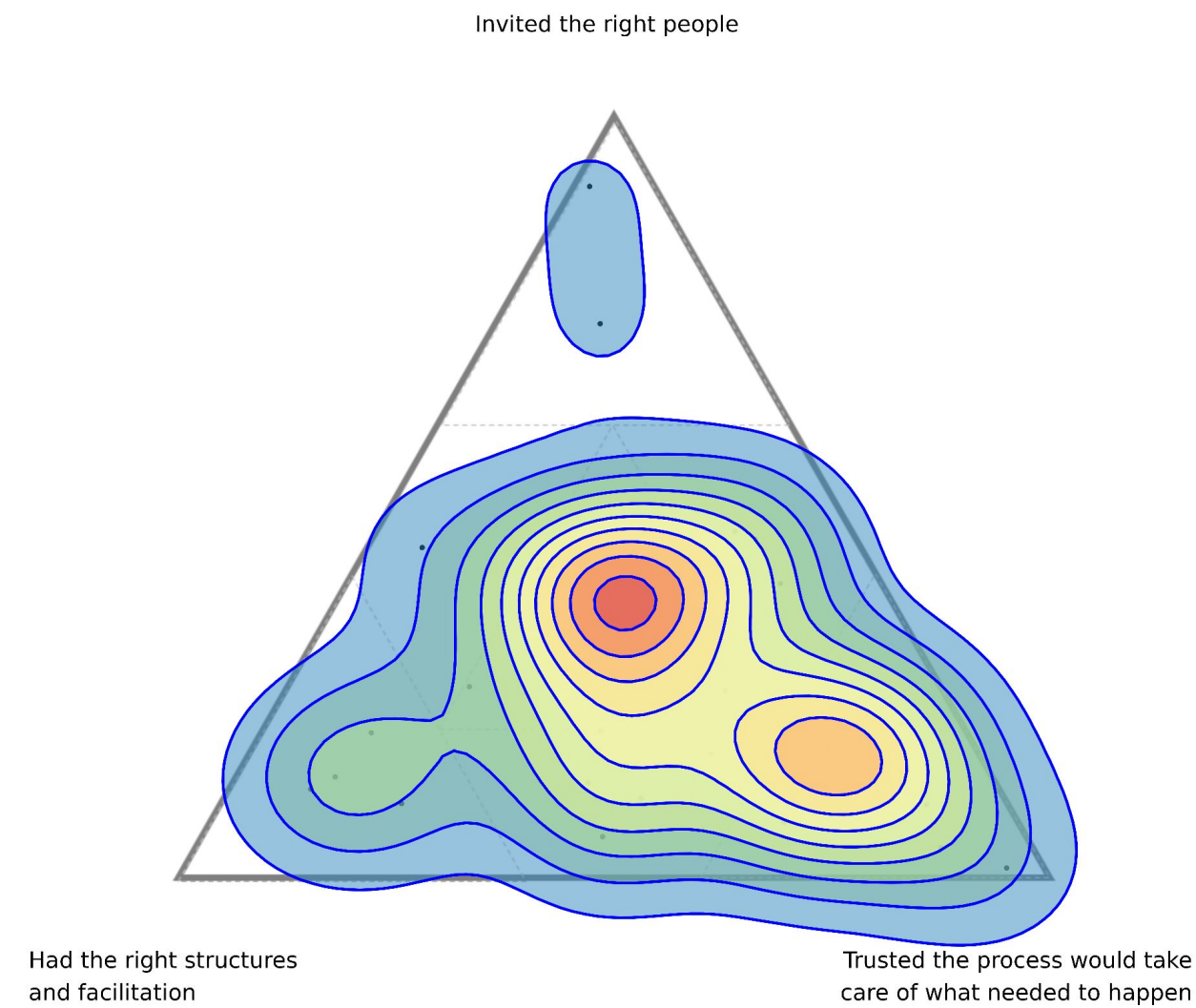
Grounding - Embodied Decisionmaking - Self-Witnessing



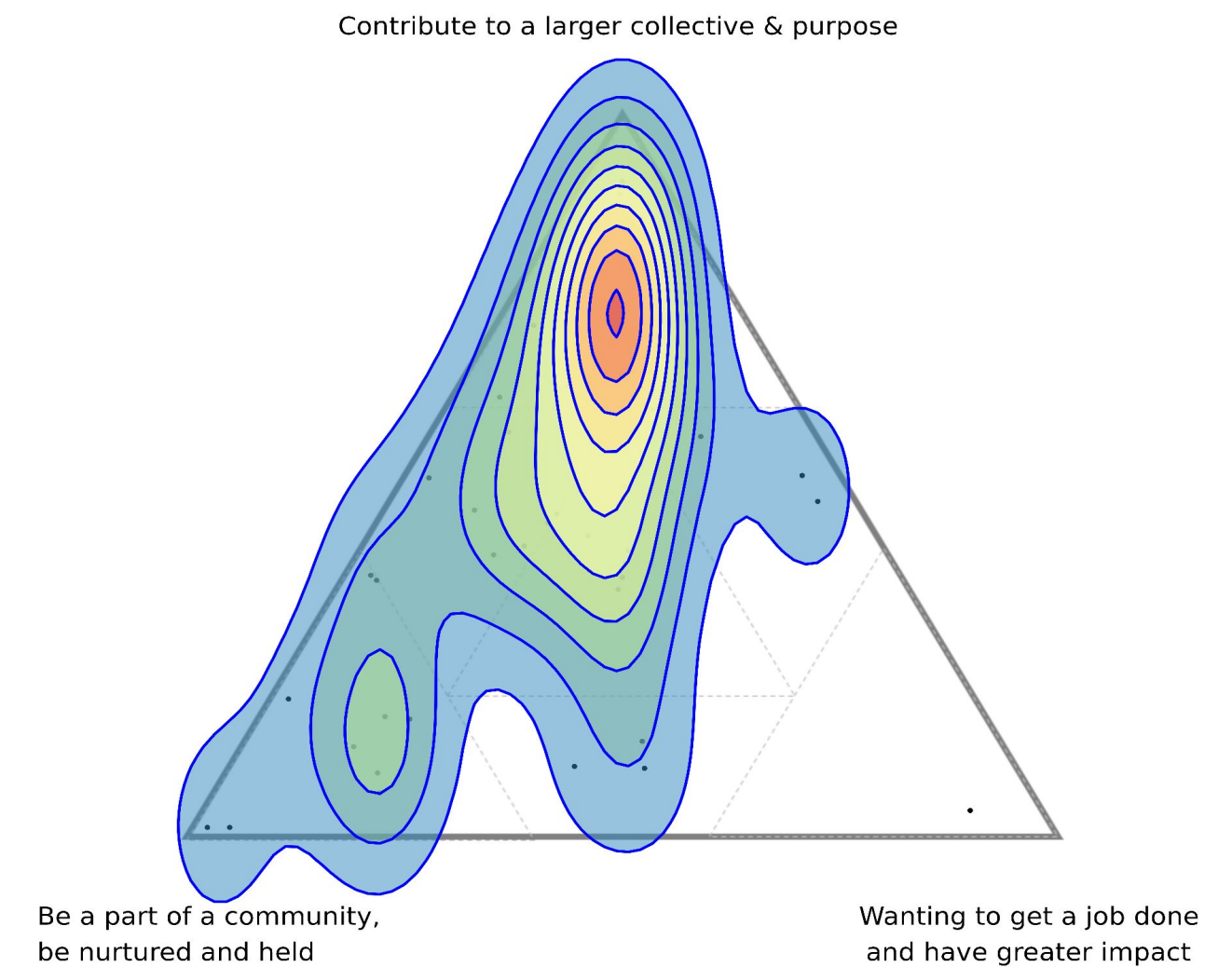
Action Research on Coherence using Sensemaker® in different change agent communities (IDG, Holomovement etc) – (IFIS)

Individual Real-life experiences + collective patterns

1.4 Relating to my story, I feel we...



1.2 In my story, the main motivation came from wanting to...

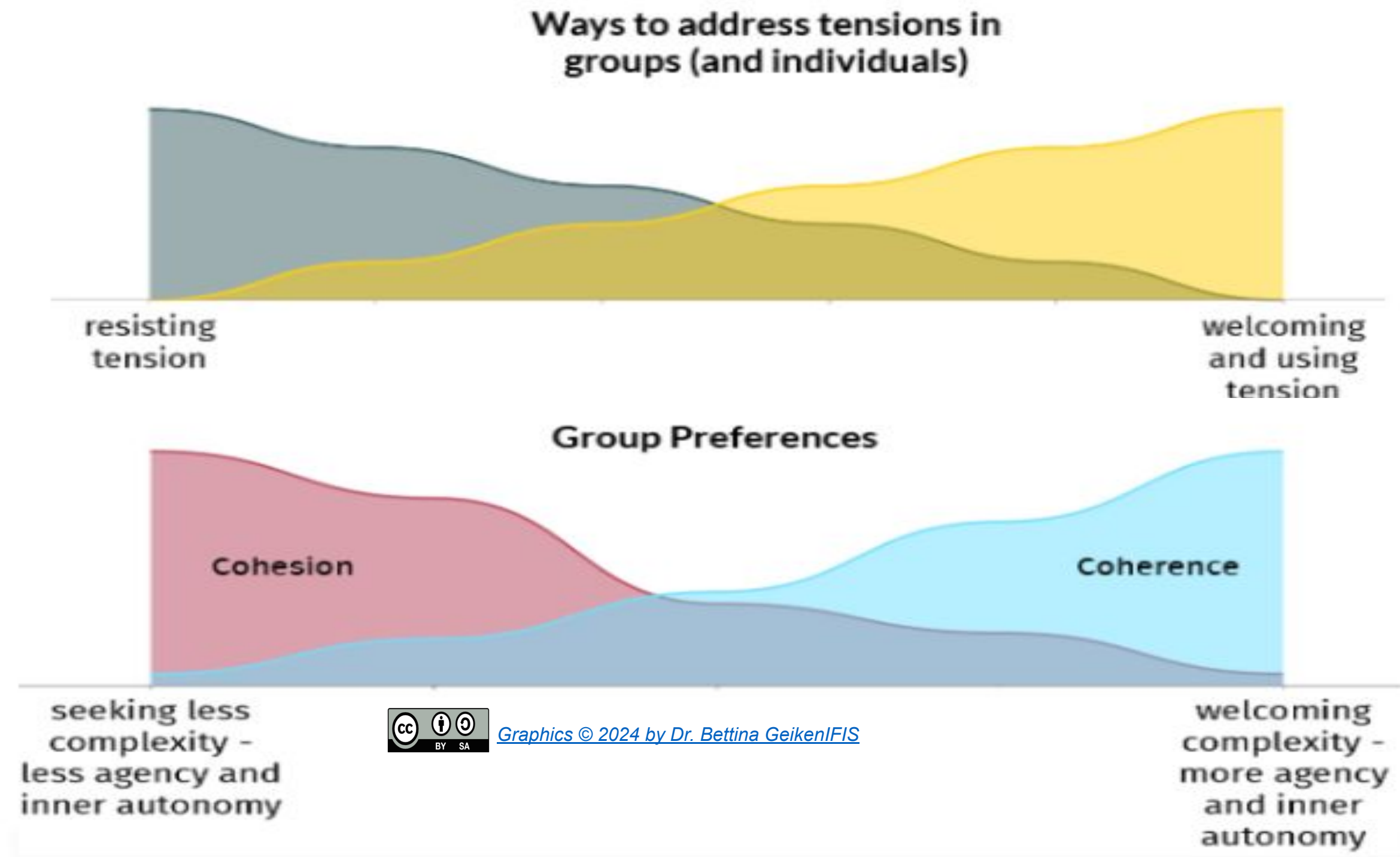


Examples of collective sensemaking patterns

Major insight from Sensemaker Research

Coherence versus Cohesion

The degree of **openness towards tension**, dissonance, frustration, and chaos are **indicators of a group/system's potential for coherence**.



Coherence versus Cohesion – Key characteristics

Coherence

- **Definition:** A dynamic state of clarity and flow that emerges within complex adaptive systems (like groups) when individual filters, assumptions, and cultural differences have been "burned away." and/or when individuals with high personal coherence and intentionality come together
- **Essence:** It enables **deep collective inquiry**, fresh insight, and creative prototyping.
- **Characteristics:**
Emergent, not instantly designable.
 - Rooted in sensory, emotional, and conceptual clarity.
 - Requires time and intentional processes
 - Can be disrupted and re-entered through diversity and open inquiry.
- Any **journey into coherence** goes in stages, including periods of dissonance, tension and decoherence. **Working through** periods of "decoherence" and **tension is necessary.**

Cohesion

- **Definition:** The bonding, stickiness, and sense of belonging within a group — the "us" identity.
- **Essence:** It supports **group stability, identity, and shared language.**
- **Characteristics:**
 - Based on ritual, shared culture, and belonging.
 - Useful for continuity and action-taking.
 - Can hinder novelty and deep inquiry if not disrupted.
 - Tends to resist change and challenge to group norms

Contributing to the IDG Book with the Chapter “Deepcasting the IDGs” (IFIS, Emerge, THC)

Enjoy 40% off
Everything on De Gruyter Brill *

Use code
DGBSUMMER25
Valid until Aug 31
* Terms and conditions

Home > Business & Economics > Chapter 24 Deep casting the IDGs: Exploring the cross-dimensional quality of coherence

CHAPTER

Licensed

CITE THIS

Download chapter

Chapter 24 Deep casting the IDGs: Exploring the cross-dimensional quality of coherence

Elke Fein, Bettina Geiken, Ivo J. Mensch, Leigh Biddlecome and Claudine Villemot-Kienzle

Published by

DE GRUYTER

Become an author with De Gruyter Brill

Explore this Subject → How to publish with us →

This chapter is in the book
Inner Development Goals

Inner Development G...
degruyterbrill.com/docu...

=

Real change extends beyond individuals—it requires a shift in how we lead, collaborate,...

Taxonomy of capacities related to Coherence (THC & all)

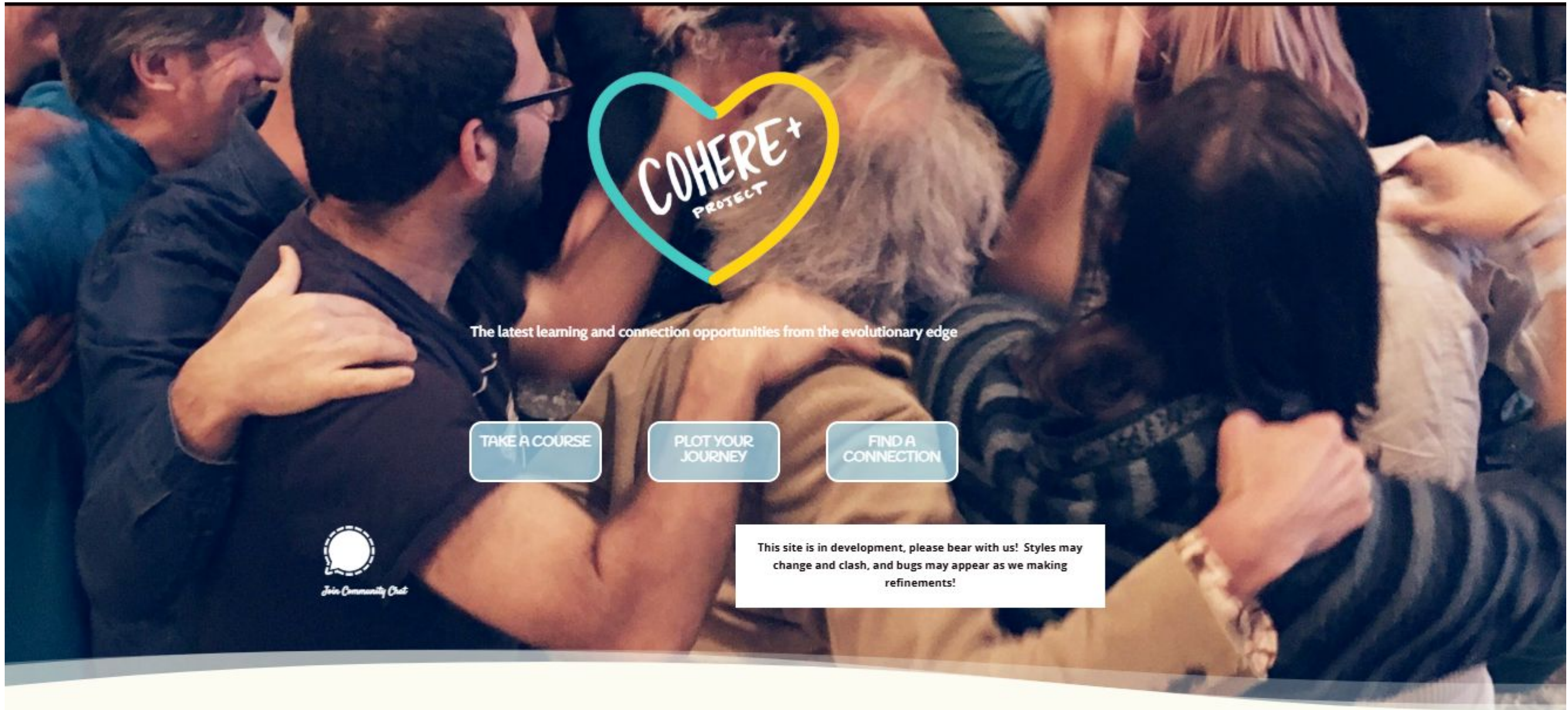
Being a Community of Coherence

5 Themes,
13 Capacities,
Centered around
Higher Purpose.

Userprofiles




Online Learning Portal around Coherence (THC & all)




The latest learning and connection opportunities from the evolutionary edge

[TAKE A COURSE](#) [PLOT YOUR JOURNEY](#) [FIND A CONNECTION](#)

 Join Community Chat

This site is in development, please bear with us! Styles may change and clash, and bugs may appear as we making refinements!



— Regeneration — Co-creation — Integral — Collaboration — Game B —

The Cohere+ project provides a range of resources you can use to playfully and joyfully explore the potential of coherence and empower you as a paradigmatic system change agent!

When we cohere, we feel harmony and flow in ourselves, with others and the planet. Coherence is the key to thriving life and world. Enjoy resources here to discover how coherence can benefit your own life, organisation or community.

[REGISTER AND LOG-ON →](#)

Online Learning Portal around Coherence

Mini-courses
Coherence Barometer
Journey Builder
Guide for CoC
Directory of mapped
organisations

Develop your Coherence Capacities

TAKE A COHERE+ LEARNING SERIES

Each Learning Series provides a group of courses that introduce the student to the core themes, skills and strategies required to develop a core Coherence Capacity. Developed by experts in the evolutionary field, students can select the courses that are specifically relevant to their professional context or their personal development.



Learn how to develop self-awareness, navigate complexity and understand your purpose to come into personal coherence.



Constructively and creatively manage tensions to create, maintain and enhance social coherence.



Support the development of a coherent community: a nurturing culture and integral processes and structures.



Explore foundations from which to develop coherent meta-strategies and architectures for complex social systems.



Develop skills in social coherence, how to hold unity in diversity and process tensions between people and groups effectively.

Coherence in action – Observations from the field (Ekskäret)

“**Coherent Sensorium**” model – coherent sound, visuals, and movement within workshop and group processes

Workshop settings: Cohere+ **IDG post-Summit Integration Workshops** as part of the IDG Summits in 2023 and 2024

- *Artistic approaches not for tokenistic reasons but rather to create a ‘coherent sensorium’*



Cohere+ – Embodiment and Integration sessions for IDG Summit participants in 2023 and 2024 (Ekskäret & Emerge)





Major Links

[Mapping the field](#)

[Cohere+ Learning Portal](#)

[Essays and Profiles](#)

[Guide for Communities of Coherence](#)

[Dialogues, Political Salons - Summary Activities](#)

Please reach out

info@thehaguecenter.org

info@ifis-freiburg.de

whatisemerging@gmail.com

hello@secondrenaissance.net



[© 2025 by IFIS - Dr. Bettina Geiken/Cohere+](#)

Credits graphics: © Helena Maier



Co-funded by
the European Union