

# Creating systems that foster well-being



**Biological**



**Social**

*We are a global community of individuals, organizations and networks that lead the way in creating systems that foster biological, social, and economic well-being.*



**Economic**



Academy for Systems Change  
collective capacity for a scale that matters

# It's time for a new approach

We are in a time of deep questioning and change. The questions we speak of are global in nature. We have surpassed seven billion people, we are experiencing the direct impacts of climate uncertainty, escalating globalization, and technology has transformed the way we operate, communicate and connect. We have collectively created a new context for today's leaders. **So we must now ask ourselves: Is it time for a new set of behaviors, a new way of being, a new way of leading?**

In many corners of the world, the opportunity for leading in new ways is emerging. Social entrepreneurs, businesses, government and civil society organizations are showing glimpses of how to work together in new ways, unveiling a time of opportunity and possibility for a new way of being with each other and the Earth.

**Leaders facilitating these “emerging new realities” are characterized by a profound sense of purpose.** They are masters in balancing the personal, intellectual, emotional and social aspects of leading, capable of standing “at the edge of the system” and visualizing the limits and possibilities that emerge.



# The power of awareness-based systems change

**Lasting change requires awareness and attention on three levels**, beginning with ourselves, and how we influence the world around us. We call this the ‘inner work’. Once committed to this lifelong work, we are then better prepared to address change in organizations and the global systems we rely on to thrive. It’s more than a process, it’s a new way of leading.



The deep changes necessary to accelerate progress against society’s most intractable problems require a unique type of leader—the system leader.

**A system leader brings people and groups together to collaborate on common challenges.** A system leader helps participants to address differences and tensions head on. A system leader seeks to guide people in leveraging the knowledge that comes from bringing all ‘voices’ in the system together.

System leaders may or may not hold positional power or embody a particular leadership style. They are not likely to have all the answers. In fact, this form of leadership involves creating the conditions for others to exercise collective leadership to gain traction on their shared challenges.



# Our Academy Fellows

**Our vision is to cultivate and build the awareness and capacity of emerging leaders** worldwide to set a new course for our collective futures. We believe this is one of the highest leverage investments we can make.



We invite leaders into a unique program based on a few critical principles: they are individuals who have a proven track record in work focused on some of the more complex problems of the world that need acceleration and scale; they are leaders whose work has the potential to transform the organization or system in which they operate; and they are committed to life-long practices in the development of self.

During the formal three-year program, we think, learn and practice together, Faculty and Fellows, drawing from an ever-growing body of systems change methodologies.

**The Fellows program builds a strong community among these leaders**, and is supported by the Faculty through mentoring, coaching, workshops, online learning and retreats. This program also facilitates some of the highest-level learning opportunities: cross-sector, cross-issue learning from each other.

**Once in the Academy, the learning and commitment never end.**

# Academy Fellow-in-action in Costa Rica

The Osa Peninsula in Costa Rica is a rainforest ecosystem that harbors 5% of the biodiversity of the entire planet in less than a thousandth of a percent of its total surface area. These ecosystems are vital for the health of our planet.



***“We taught people about the importance of collective action and I’ve seen people work together where they previously were in conflict. We created the most comprehensive analysis of the Osa Peninsula to date which has been extremely beneficial to the government and community. Our systems analysis is a key component of the new sustainable development plan.”***

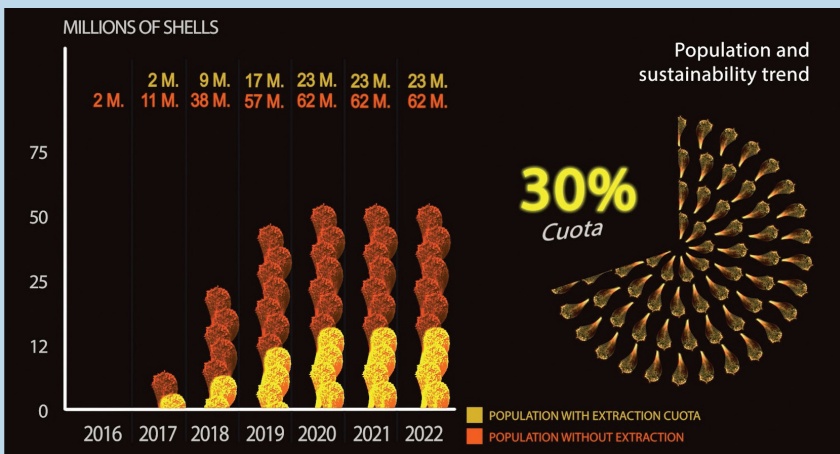
*—Jennifer Menke*

Organizations in this region had been working to develop a regenerative blue/green economy but lacked a holistic strategy, or systems approach, that would support the overall health of the peninsula. Millions of dollars had been spent without success. A different approach was needed.

Jennifer Menke, an Academy Fellow, felt a deep calling to the Osa Peninsula as a result of co-leading retreats with Academy co-founder and Way of Nature CEO, John Milton. Over the past three years, Jennifer has applied her deeper understanding of awareness-based systems change to make the seemingly impossible happen.

Working in collaboration with Stanford University’s INOGO program and over 100 local and national government officials, foundations, community and indigenous leaders and other multi-stakeholder groups, **Jennifer led an effort to successfully create the first comprehensive systems map of the Osa Peninsula.** By engaging all of the key stakeholders in this process, they have developed a plan for the evolution of a blue/green economy, addressing the social, ecological and economic dimensions in a balanced and ethical manner.

# Awareness-based systems thinking changes lives



The fishing community of La Paz, Mexico, El Manglito, faced the collapse of pen shell and catarina populations as a result of overfishing. Following the principles of awareness-based systems thinking, competing interests became collaborators on a solution that is resulting in a dramatic restoration of these species.



Academy Fellow, Beth Hunter is Program Director at the J.W. McConnell Family Foundation, focused on the Sustainable Food Systems Initiative. Applying systems change principles, she and her colleagues launched Nourish, an initiative focused on bringing food into a more central role in health care, with an emphasis on sustainable food. Nourish is delivering a two-year program for 25 leaders in healthcare facilities across Canada.

# **Your support is a leveraged investment in lasting change**

The Academy for Systems Change  
relies on the generosity of donors  
who share our vision  
for a better world.

Investing in building  
the capability of system leaders  
is a high leverage investment  
that can accelerate the transformation  
of communities, organizations  
and global systems.

We appreciate your support  
for making lasting change possible.

## The Academy

designs, develops and delivers  
a range of programs  
to support, coach and build community  
among emerging and existing leaders  
who are at the pioneering edge  
of systems change work.

Unlike conventional leadership training  
organizations, the Academy's approach  
fosters deep understanding  
of the powerful connection  
between change within the individual  
and changing the systems  
in which they work.

Our goal is to empower these leaders  
and their communities to solve social,  
economic and environmental challenges  
in a holistic way that produces lasting change.



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