



Academy for Systems Change

## Awareness-based Systems Thinking for a Better Future



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ACADEMY FOR SYSTEMS CHANGE

*Most of the problems faced by humankind concerns our inability to grasp and manage the increasingly complex systems of our world.*

Peter Senge

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## Creating a Better Future



**Complexity, size and scale are the hallmarks of the problems facing organizations, communities, and individuals.**

The Academy for Systems Change works with leaders, through proven tools, knowledge, and practices, to grow their ability to lead in complex social systems that foster biological, social and economic well-being.

People working in complex systems such as healthcare, business, education, food, and the non-profit sector are building their abilities to engage with others; creating new ways to think and work together towards better results.

**The multiplier effect of this work is driving change in places all around the world right now.**





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## Systems Thinking Experts

The leaders who originally inspired the work of the Academy for Systems Change



### **Donella H. "Dana" Meadows**

(March 13, 1941 – February 20, 2001)

Dana was a pioneering American environmental scientist, teacher, and writer. She is best known as lead author of the influential books *The Limits to Growth* and *Thinking in Systems: a Primer*.

### **Peter M. Senge**

Peter is an American systems scientist and senior lecturer at the MIT Sloan School of Management. He is the well-known author of *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization*.



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## Our History

In 2016, The Academy for Systemic Change and the Donella Meadows Institute joined forces, coming together as the Academy for Systems Change, guided by our shared mission of advancing the field of awareness-based systemic change in order to accelerate ecological, social, and economic well-being.

### Key Milestones

**1996**

Donella Meadows founds the Sustainability Institute in Vermont, USA – before she passes away in 2001.

**2010**

A group of like-minded individuals, including Peter Senge, Darcy Winslow, Hal Hamilton, Robert Hanig and Charles Holmes, found the Academy for Systemic Change.

**2016**

The Academy for Systemic Change combines with the Sustainability Institute, and starts doing business as the Academy for Systems Change.

Through **COLLABORATION**,  
**TRANSFORMATION** happens at the  
**PERSONAL, COLLECTIVE** and  
**WHOLE SYSTEMS** level

[www.academyforchange.org](http://www.academyforchange.org)



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*... the development of  
self is foundational*

Systems thinking is a way of thinking about, and a language for describing and understanding, the forces and interrelationships that shape the behaviour of systems.

This discipline helps us see how to change systems more effectively, and to act more in tune with the larger processes of the natural and economic world.

*The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook*  
*Peter Senge, Academy co-Founder and Board Member*



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## Systems Change

**Systems change** - the process of changing systems as a result of changing the way the people within them operate - **is inherently an 'inner' and 'outer' process or journey.**



This circle of systems change points to four interrelated factors that we need to embrace in order to support deep change.

## Development of Self, Team, Organization and System

This work involves deep shifts in mental models, relationships, and taken-for-granted ways of operating as much as it involves shifts in organizational roles and formal structures, metrics and performance management, and goals and policies. Because of this, we believe that **the development of self is foundational.**

This inner work—which involves developing awareness, compassion, understanding, and wisdom—also extends to teams, networks, organizations, and ultimately to the larger systems within which we work.

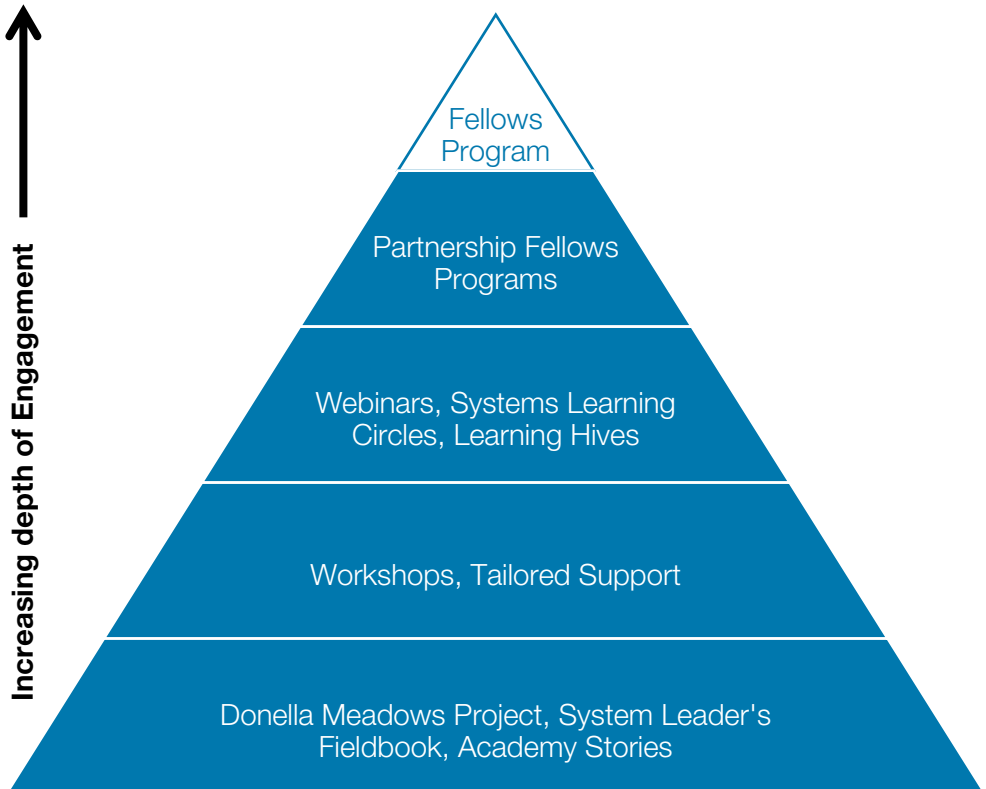


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## How we do it

The Academy works across activities related to personal, organizational and systems level change approaches; three dimensions that when applied in combination (as opposed to in isolation) have proven to inspire and escalate collective energy for positive change.

## Pathway to Impact





# Our Programs



## Dissemination of Knowledge and Approaches

We provide free access to tools and resources for systems leaders around the world to initiate transformational change. We also **capture and share inspiring examples of deep systems change** to foster greater understanding of these resources.

## Intensive Development and Practice

Our Academy Fellows Program and our Partnership Cohorts, led by members of the Academy community, create in depth “**learning while doing**” in the chosen field of practice.

## Extending the Learning

We develop teams and networks through online learning opportunities. The Academy organizes a series of workshops and webinars to introduce the practical application of **key systems change tools and practices**.



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## Fellows Program

**Academy Fellows are leaders from disciplines and organizations around the world.**

The leaders we work with are individuals with a deep sense of purpose, and the commitment to building networks for collective action to tackle the problems that are bigger than any one person, organization or community can solve **alone**.

Whether strengthening indigenous economies in Canada, engaging with hotels in Thailand to eliminate plastics from the oceans, or deepening the cultural connections between immigrants and residents in Colorado, our Fellows apply the Academy's tools and practices to create the changes needed for a better world today and for our children in the future.



Since 2014, our Academy Fellows program has convened **44 leaders** from **23 countries**, and **36 domains of expertise**.



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*“People sometimes think the word ‘destiny’ is too much, but I really feel that way about the Fellows program. You could go round-the-world yourself, but the collective nature of this journey is fundamental.”*

**Yunlan Ni**

Academy Fellows' Graduate,  
Member of Academy for Systems Change Faculty



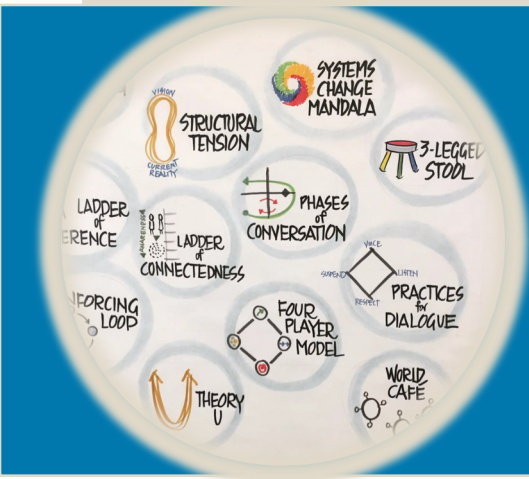
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## System Leader's Fieldbook



Gaining traction on today's ever-more complex challenges requires *collective leadership*. That means practicing new ways of operating at the levels of *Self, Team, Organization, and System*.

Our online Fieldbook provides tools and resources for system leaders to develop the skills to accelerate progress on intractable problems.



To make real and lasting change, we need to recognize that we are part of the systems we seek to change, interact productively with - and learn from - others, collaborate across internal stakeholder groups, and work across boundaries to co-create the future.



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## Donella Meadows Project



**We continue to learn from Donella (Dana) H. Meadows legacy created during her transformative life as a scholar, writer, and teacher.**

As a result of Dana's leadership she became a role model and voice for the sustainability movement through her internationally best-selling books and articles. We maintain a freely accessible archive of Dana's work online to inform and inspire those who carry on this work today.

The Academy for Systems Change develops new resources and programs that apply her ground-breaking ideas to current issues, making them available to an ever-larger network of students, practitioners, citizens and leaders in social change.

[www.donellameadows.org](http://www.donellameadows.org)



*"Find the people who already have the  
commitment, the mindset, the skills and the ideas  
and empower the heck out of these people"*

*Donella Meadows*



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## Get Involved!

You Can Support the Leaders You Want  
to See in the World

The Academy for Systems Change is cultivating systems leaders with the skills to engage people to accelerate ecological, social, and economic well-being. As a 501c3 USA registered charitable non-profit organization, we rely on donations from individuals, foundations, and businesses to make our work possible.

**Please join us with a donation to support this powerful and urgent work.**

- **Sponsor an Academy Fellow**, helping a leader to experience the three year intensive Academy Fellowship program.
- **Become a Donella Meadows Supporter**, and ensure Dana's wisdom is experienced and shared for generations to come.
- **Make a monthly contribution**, providing the essential fuel to create the Leaders we need now to solve the most complex problems we face together.

You can make a donation on the Support Us page of our website or email [Ginger@academyforchange.org](mailto:Ginger@academyforchange.org) to set up a time to discuss the other ways you can contribute to the Academy.

**Your support for the Academy for Systems Change creates leaders who understand and have what it takes to create systems level change.**

**Thank you!**

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