

PLANET4B Research Brief

understanding Plural values, intersectionality, Leverage points, Attitudes, Norms, behaviour and social Learning in Transformation for Biodiversity decision making



People, Places, and Policies: Stories of Pathways for Transformative Change

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Keywords

case studies, biodiversity, intersectionality, transformative change, leverage points, co-creation

We need real change in biodiversity prioritisation

The protection of nature and the preservation of biodiversity are widely recognised as urgent priorities. But how can we **move beyond** well-worn communication panels, alarming statistics, and broad statements?

The **PLANET4B** project addresses this challenge. Over a three-year period, it co-created place-based experiments and examined sector-based examples that reveal leverage points and enabling conditions for transformative change at the individual, community, and institutional levels.

Eleven stories, lots of lessons

Over three years, the project conducted **eleven case studies** to understand how biodiversity-related decision-making interacts with social practices, values, and institutional contexts. Alongside analyses, participatory and arts-based work with Learning Communities and Stakeholder Boards has revealed valuable insights into social–ecological change for biodiversity and social justice.

The compendium of Transformative Change Stories brings together these insights, helping us to understand the pathways, tools, and opportunities for transformative change – as well as the obstacles and challenges.

Key findings

Across their very different contexts and scales, the cases highlight common points where change gains momentum. These include:

- Creating **creative safe spaces** that dismantle barriers of exclusion and allow trust to grow;
- **Fostering knowledge cocreation** and sharing through experimentation, dialogue, and recognition of diverse expertise;
- **Building agency** so that people, particularly marginalised and vulnerable groups, can act as stewards and actors of change;
- **Forming partnerships** instead of separation that bridge diversity, sustain living networks, and connect sectors;
- **Re-imagining regulations** for social and environmental justice that enable circularity, sufficiency, and bottom-up initiatives.

Readers will learn:

- how the Oslo case advanced inclusive approaches to outdoor learning, making nature experiences accessible for children with diverse abilities and needs;
- what creative methods were used in Erfurt to involve young people – especially those with less political voice, such as migrants – in discussions on biodiversity, and how this shapes their decisions;
- how a small initiative among people of South Asian and African heritage in the UK grew into a space of connection and mutual learning about biodiversity;
- how a community garden in Graz became a model of inclusivity, cultural and biological diversity, and empowerment;
- how pupils and teachers benefited from experiential learning about nature and biodiversity through hands-on gardening activities;
- how small rural communities can support preserving local plant varieties through collective seed saving and the exchange of traditional knowledge;
- what links may exist between religion and biodiversity-friendly farming, and how creative methods can make these connections visible;
- how biodiversity is interwoven with social justice, global trade, financial decision-making, and the environmental and social impacts of industries such as fashion and agriculture.

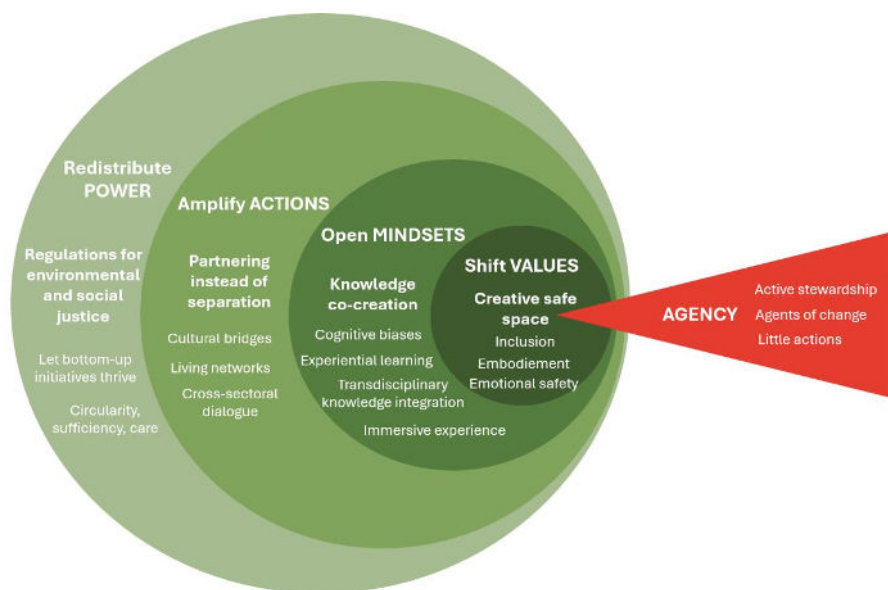


Figure 1. From safe spaces to systemic change (own elaboration inspired by Karen O'Brien's three spheres of transformation).

Beyond key lessons of Learning Communities and sector-specific findings, the comparative analysis reveals cross-cutting factors essential for enabling transformative change, such as creative safe spaces, fostering knowledge, building agency, forming partnerships, and re-imagining regulations for social and environmental justice.

These insights are relevant to researchers, policymakers, practitioners, and community organisers seeking to strengthen the link between biodiversity conservation and broader social transformation.

This publication will be of particular interest if you:

- are engaged in biodiversity research, policy, or practice;
- work within one of the sectors represented by the case studies;
- are involved in community or civil society initiatives with an environmental focus;
- wish to deepen your understanding of drivers and barriers to social–ecological transformation;
- seek practical approaches to support systemic, inclusive and just change.

**DOWNLOAD THE
RESEARCH DOCUMENT**

About PLANET4B Project

Horizon Europe research project PLANET4B aims to understand and influence decision-making affecting biodiversity and to map existing knowledge that explains why certain decisions are made, to understand better how biodiversity can be prioritised in our decision-making.