

Love, Peace and Understanding in Europe?

A report from the LiFT workshop in Caux/Switzerland, June-July 2015

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Background

Europe is standing in the middle of severe dilemmas. Migration, economic crisis, annoyed members within the EU, terrorism, and unstable relations to other countries. The **Caux Initiatives of Change**, have been dealing with problems of peace and conflict between nations in Europe and beyond for many decades. The unique location of today's Caux conferences, Caux Palace, has been constructed around the beginning of the 20th century as a luxury hotel for privileged people, operating since 1902. The building is even said to have been the inspiration for the castle in Disney's animated movie *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*.



After World War I, the financial crisis of the 1920-ies led to severe financial problems, so that the building had to be closed and sold at the beginning of World War II. During WW II and immediately afterwards, it served as a shelter for refugees from Italy and Hungary. Shortly after the war, a number of Swiss citizens around Frank Buchman, the founder of "Moral Rearmament", joined funds in order to acquire the palace which they managed to do in 1946 at a rather low, symbolic price, sponsored by the city of Montreux. One of them had made a vow according to which he would help to promote peace and reconciliation if Switzerland was spared from destruction during the war. This was the beginning of a series of meetings between French and German leaders hosted in Caux palace, in 1946. From then, Caux evolved into a home for peace initiatives and transnational cooperation on a global level.

Nowadays, the Caux "Initiatives of Change" host a series of weekly conferences and workshops on topics like peace building, social justice and global sustainability every summer, with each week being dedicated to a special thematic focus. The network of the "**Friends of Caux**", supporters and (former) participants now includes thousands of people worldwide, among them "elders" who started coming to Caux in the 1950-ies, and young volunteers helping with day-to-day management and organization of these meetings in Caux Palace.

The location is indeed not an ordinary conference hotel. The reception by the staff, all of whom are inspired by the purpose and culture of the place, is indeed exceptional. Caux' culture, warmly held by the "elder" and iterated during manifold interactive sessions, can be experienced immediately by guests and participants. Plenary sessions are usually mixed with and followed by workshops, group

discussions and other interactive formats. Also, all participants are invited to take part in regular service shifts, preparing meals and cleaning up afterwards. This practice adds a lot to the spirit of cooperation among each group. Besides, the premises and beautiful surrounding invite participants to network, exchange experiences and establish new links with likeminded individuals across the globe themselves.



The “**Impact Leadership Track**” offered by the LiFT-project was part of a thematic conference week hosted from 26 June -1 July 2015 by a group called “**Trust and Integrity in the Global Economy (“TIGE)**”. LiFT’s Leadership Track featured the topic “Living well within the limits of the planet”, aligning well with the general topic and larger program of the TIGE week. This was an ideal match since *Trust and Integrity in the Global Economy* is also about one of the core purposes of LiFT, namely connecting the personal, individual and the global, systemic on an inner level. Rational knowing is not enough. The intellect cannot handle all information in today’s world. We better use our whole intelligence in our aim to solve complex problems, together. We need to become more familiar with the inner space within ourselves that connects mind, body and soul. Holding this space can bring about the inner transformation that is needed. This holds true both at an individual level for everyone, and at the collective level - society as a whole, including business, NGO’s etc.

Being a participant at Caux’ Initiatives of Change

This was my first time in Caux. I immediately met a culture of warm professionalism, curiosity and willpower – and besides this, a large number of wonderful and impressive people.

On Sunday I had lunch with **Emmanuel Mutisya**, a political leader in Kenya. Earlier that day he had held the morning lecture about Personal Leadership. Emmanuel Mutisya was as a businessman and, as such, part of the corrupt system in his country. After shifting perspective abroad, he is now a role model for most countries in the world in terms of refusing to practice corruption. My lunch together with his African friend and other participants from The US and Nepal was easygoing. As a Swede I became a

natural, added friend at the table. We joked a lot around bribes, how much was usual the price for this and that, but also shared intimate stories about our lives. In the end, one of the lunch-friends from Kenya said: "Bye, my semi-African friend!"

On the day before, **Pedro Langre**, a star consultant from Mexico, lectured about his way to success. He works with top level executives in Governments and business in 50 countries. He talked passionately about how he coaches CEOs into clarity about his or her personal purpose. Thereafter he helps them to define the desired legacy for him or her personally. Only when this is accomplished does the work continue with the respective organization. All top leaders and board members should define their own purpose – so his message – and align it with the purpose for the company.



Another lecture was also about values and the power of storytelling. During an exercise, we participants felt an instant increase in trust with respect to „strangers“ at the same table after just some minutes of storytelling and intense listening. **Alexandra Berg** and **Farzad Khoshnoud** from World Values Initiative, Sweden, held this seminar.

As a Keynote speaker, **Sunil Mathur**, C.E.O. of Siemens Southeast Asia, described the hurtful journey of his company from "catastrophe to recovery". About ten years ago, media revealed major corruption at the top level within Siemens. In 2006 the crisis was a fact for the whole company. They were risking to lose the US market, for example. This is when the "Operation Siemens Compliance" started. "Only clean business is Siemens business" was the guiding principle of the new CEO. Lawyers, and lots of external experts of accounting came into the whole, global organization. Salesmen were no longer supposed to support their customers with dinners, cricket etc. New routines were established for recruiting the "right people", i.e. people with sustainable values. Moreover, a central focal point was to shift the discussions on "what values" to "how to live these values". Therefore, trainings on "the Heart of Effective Leadership" were conducted. Sunil Mathur emphasizes the importance of being oneself at work. "Don't shift personality at work", he says. "Be the good person you, hopefully, are at home—at work as well." Sunil Mathur at least was very grateful to his family for the support he received during the worst parts of the process. Surprisingly enough, focusing on product values finally turned out to be more profitable than previous practices. And the journey still goes on – now from Compliance to Ownership.



Another nice opportunity to meet new people was our participation in the regular service shifts around preparing the meals. The LiFT-team did its service as the "**happy breakfast team**" every morning between 06:30 and 09:15h. Ten of us were out each morning preparing, serving, dishing and cleaning for 150 participants within the larger TIGE program.

Being a part of “The Impact Leadership Track”

The 20 participants of LiFT’s Leadership Track were invited to help in positioning our countries as Global Leaders in sustainability, based on experiences of the Swiss Impact Hub. This was a “real” task all of us are concerned about. At the same time, it felt like the challenge of being a part of a “Mission impossible”. That is to decrease the ecological footprint of western countries like Switzerland while maintaining the level of “personal development” – and assist poor countries to better the lives of all their citizens, without producing a larger footprint than that of “one planet”.

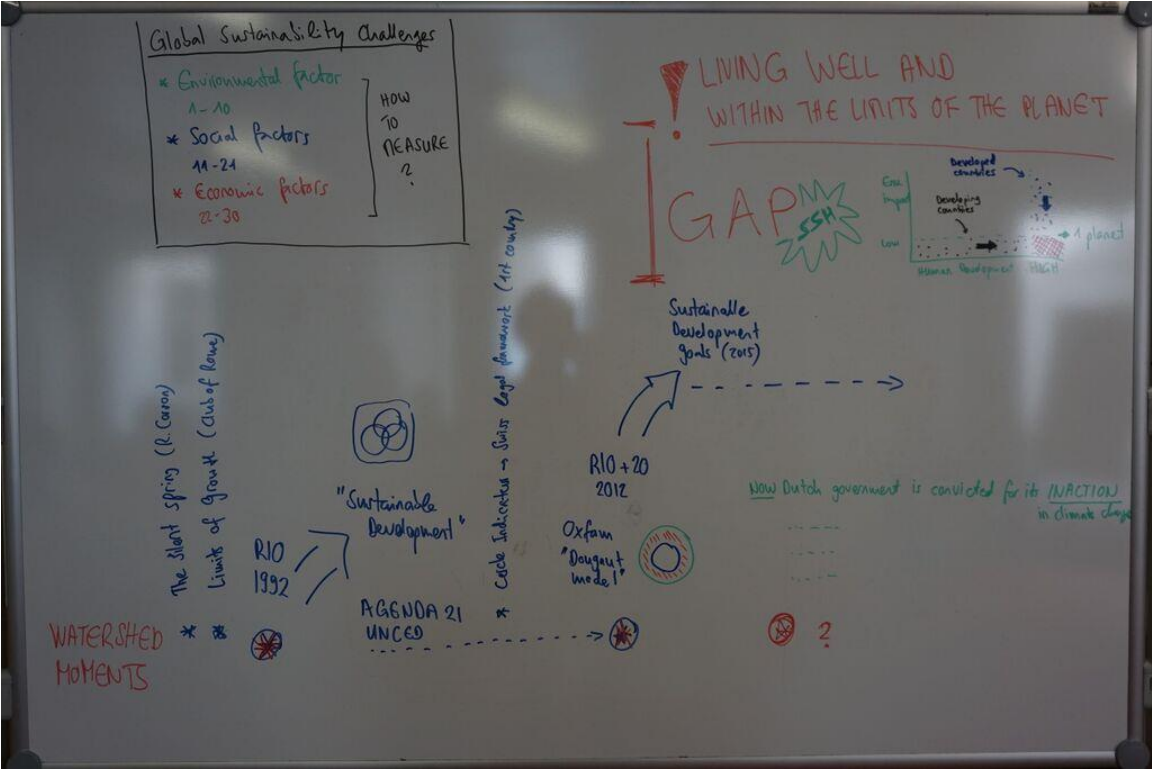


Developed countries currently consume more than two or three “planets”, referring to the international measurement frame of the human footprint on the earth. The gap between the current worldwide consumption of resources and the amount which the planet can reproduce in one year was framed as the difference between “Living well within one planet”, and existing data from measurements of critical environmental, social and economic factors.

Unfortunately, there was also a gap between the expectations of the participants and the contextual setting at Caux. The TIGE speakers were focusing on values, trust and integrity, whereas the participants of the Impact Leadership Track were given a framework for action and were suggested to construct new ways of measuring and acting for sustainability.

As mentioned before, the larger TIGE event focused on the link between the personal and the global. But that context was more about stating the fact that trust and integrity was needed, and that neither information nor intellect is enough to achieve them. The larger program said that we all have to use more aspects of our selves in order to successfully address the present, complex challenges. The expectations among several of us participants were closer to the larger context than to the structure of the first day in the Impact Leadership Track. Important, but far too much information was given during the first hours of The Impact Leadership Track. So the energy got a bit drained during the afternoon, day 1. Frustration was present and also voiced via some clear feedbacks from participants. The learning journey of the facilitators in this regard took some time that first evening. But as a result, the following

days became very inspiring for all of us. The facilitators started facilitating the participants more from their needs and expectations – with sustainability as the red thread.



At the end of the workshop, three different groups summarized the experience of the Impact Leadership Track in three different ways. All three demonstrated the same sense of common experience from these days, though. A major learning was the importance of focusing more on the process of collaboration itself than on pre-defined results. We all got a visible and strong experience of the impact of different ways of taking on leadership. And we all found the embedded seminar very good. Finally, the initial frustration turned into a strong, positive energy and concrete learning for all of us!

Learnings from the larger program

An overall learning from the Caux and TIGE experience can be summarized by the story of **Ahmet Shala**, Minister of Economy & Finance of the Republic of Kosovo 2008-2011, who lost the larger part of his family, friends and relatives during the recent conflict there. In his stringent, emotionally strong speech, Ahmet open heartily illustrated the private horror of war and detriment caused by fundamentalists in his country. “No one is safe, until everyone is safe”, he said. This is why taking responsibility for the greater common good starts at each individual taking action. He therefore put some of his own learnings into the following comparison:

<i>Do more than ...</i>	<i>...and do also...</i>
Belong	Participate
Care	Help
Be fair	Be kind
Forgive	Forget
Dream	Work

Ahmed also linked this with some lessons taught to him by his father who urged him to “love until it hurts. This hurt is just mental, so continue to love and the hurt will go away”, he said. “Men have wings. Good wings. Be a wing for a friend in despair.” On this basis, Ahmed Shala developed what he calls the 4T:

Think – don’t wait for others to solve it.

Talk – don’t let bad things just continue.

Trust – in yourself first, then it is easier to trust others.

Team – co-create the future.

Starting from there now, we all can reach a new ending. Change yourself, thereby influencing others. In a way this great leader summarized the framework of the whole setting in Caux, June 2015: Trust and Integrity in the Global Economy.

Considering that most of us, urban individuals, will meet 5-10.000 persons in our lives, this is a powerful strategy. Ahmet himself invited us all to visit Kosovo, to live with him and his friends for a while in order to connect with the efforts to rebuild Kosovo spiritually and physically. Ahmet Shala demonstrated the true track of impact leadership.

Thank you!