



# **The 25 skills and qualities in the Inner Development Guide (2025)**

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## Foreword

I was the "methodology leader" in the first phase of developing the Inner Development Goals framework, in 2020-21. A survey with over 800 responses formed the basis for identifying the 23 skills and qualities that were included in the first version of the IDG framework. I wrote the relatively detailed report that explained the background and methodology, and described the meaning of the 23 skills and qualities in more elaboration than in the brief presentation that was widely distributed. I made a shorter version of the report in Swedish, primarily to make the more detailed explanations of the meaning of the 23 skills and qualities more easily available.

In 2024-25, Fredrik Lindencrona and Elif Kuş Saillard led the work on a new survey to gather a significantly larger data set, particularly in terms of geographical coverage. The work resulted in over 20,000 survey responses from no fewer than 196 countries. I participated in the final phase of this work, where we revised the IDG framework. In the second version, the IDG came to include 25 skills and qualities. Four new IDGs were added, while two of the "old" ones were removed and their content integrated into other IDGs. We also changed the names of certain IDGs and revised their brief descriptions based on the survey responses.

This paper aims to provide more elaborated explanations of the meaning of the 25 skills and qualities included in the updated version of the IDG framework, Inner Development Guide. It does not provide a detailed account of the method, material and process that led to the changes that were made. The explanations presented here are my interpretations; they have not been thoroughly reviewed and discussed in the same way as the formulations found in the "official" Inner Development Guide, which is reproduced on page 2 of this document.

Most of the text was written by me, Thomas Jordan, but some parts, especially those concerning the new IDGs, were written by the language model Claude (AI).

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# Introduction

This publication describes the 25 skills and qualities in the *Inner Development Guide* (IDG) framework (see overview on the next page). The first version of the IDG was launched in 2021. Between 2023 and 2025, extensive work was done to broaden the basis for the framework, with contributions from significantly more people from large parts of the world. Describing the process that led to the revised version of the IDG is beyond the scope of this short publication, which mainly aims to describe the 25 skills and qualities included in the framework in a more elaborated way than in the overview available on the IDG website ([innerdevelopmentgoals.org](http://innerdevelopmentgoals.org)). Much of the text has been translated and slightly edited from the English-language report I wrote in the first phase of the IDG initiative.<sup>1</sup> The full report describes in detail the background of the IDG initiative and the method used to arrive at the 23 skills and qualities included in IDG 1. In the new version of IDG, four new skills and qualities have been added, and two of the original ones have been removed and their meaning integrated with other IDGs.

The brief descriptions of the 25 IDGs on the IDG website were the result of a comprehensive deliberative process that involved a large number of experienced and competent people in reviewing word choices and formulation of the brief explanation of each IDG. However, the more detailed descriptions below have not undergone the same collaborative process, but were authored by me (with some assistance from the language model Claude [AI]).

We who were part of the core group in the IDG initiative are very aware that the various skills and qualities included in the IDG framework often overlap and are interdependent. Some are more fundamental and presuppose others. It is a valuable and important task to conduct research and develop theory on how the network of skills and qualities works.<sup>2</sup> As this is a very complex field of knowledge, there will certainly be completely different theoretical frameworks that use different concepts and principles to create models. We want to avoid advocating a particular theoretical framework and keep the IDG framework as open as possible, in the hope that people with different preferences in terms of theoretical models will be able to see the IDG framework as a useful educational tool for talking about and working with “inner development”.

It is also worth noting that the skills and qualities described below largely refer to individuals rather than collectives. We believe that the framework is highly relevant for exploring collective skills and qualities (and how they can be developed) as well, but we have not had the opportunity to do so in a serious manner at this stage of the initiative.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The report is available here: [innerdevelopmentgoals.org/s/211201\\_IDG\\_Report\\_Full.pdf](http://innerdevelopmentgoals.org/s/211201_IDG_Report_Full.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> See the essays on the website [idg.thomasjordan.se](http://idg.thomasjordan.se), which both highlight the deeper conditions for the development of the 25 IDGs at the individual and collective levels and offer critical perspectives on the framework as such.

<sup>3</sup> See, however, the essay *The Inner Development Guide: From Individual to Collective Capabilities*, on the website [idg.thomasjordan.se](http://idg.thomasjordan.se)

| <b>Being</b>   | <b>Thinking</b>  | <b>Relating</b>  | <b>Collaborating</b>  | <b>Acting</b>  |
|--|--|--|---|--|
| <p><b>Inner Compass</b><br/>A deeply felt commitment to live and act in accordance with values and purposes that serve the good of the whole.</p> <p><b>Integrity and Authenticity</b><br/>A sincere commitment to honesty and firmly grounded values, expressed and embodied in action.</p> <p><b>Openness and Learning Mindset</b><br/>A curious, adaptive attitude expressed through willingness to exchange perspectives, be vulnerable, welcome change, and grow.</p> <p><b>Self-Awareness</b><br/>Ability to be in reflective contact with thoughts, emotions, desires, and actions; to maintain a realistic self-image and to regulate oneself.</p> <p><b>Presence</b><br/>Capacity to be fully present in the here and now, to accept reality as it unfolds, and to respond in meaningful ways</p> | <p><b>Critical Thinking</b><br/>Ability to reflect on the validity of ideas, evidence, assumptions and plans.</p> <p><b>Perspective Skills</b><br/>Ability to learn from diverse perspectives and integrate insights into reflective sense-making and action.</p> <p><b>Systems Thinking</b><br/>Ability to understand complexity and work with the interconnections and properties of systems.</p> <p><b>Long-Term Orientation and Visioning</b><br/>Imagining long-term goals and staying committed to them in ways that support broader societal and ecological well-being.</p> <p><b>Creativity</b><br/>Ability to think outside conventional patterns, imagine new possibilities, and shape them into transformative ideas.</p> | <p><b>Appreciation</b><br/>Relating to people and planet Earth with a deep sense of gratitude, positive regard, and joy.</p> <p><b>Connectedness</b><br/>Feeling a sense of belonging to a larger whole, such as humanity, the planet's web of life, and the spiritual dimensions of existence.</p> <p><b>Humility</b><br/>Being able to respond to the needs of the situation without concern for one's own importance.</p> <p><b>Empathy and Compassion</b><br/>Connecting to others, oneself, and nature with kindness, care, and love, guided by the intention to reduce suffering.</p> <p><b>Forgiveness</b><br/>Willingness to transcend hostility, work through trauma, and create space for healing.</p> | <p><b>Relationship-Building Skills</b><br/>Nurturing relationships with emotional intelligence grounded in trust, respect, mutual understanding, and a spirit of collaboration.</p> <p><b>Inclusive Mindset and Intercultural Competence</b><br/>Willingness and competence to embrace diversity and include people and communities with different perspectives and backgrounds.</p> <p><b>Co-Creation Skills</b><br/>Facilitating collaborative processes with diverse stakeholders, fostering teamwork and psychological safety, and being aware of power dynamics.</p> <p><b>Communication Skills</b><br/>Ability to listen deeply, foster genuine dialogue, advocate one's views skillfully, manage conflicts constructively and adapt communication to diverse groups.</p> <p><b>Mobilization Skills</b><br/>Inspiring and enabling others to engage in shared purposes and collective action.</p> | <p><b>Courage</b><br/>Standing up for fundamental values, making decisions, taking action, and, when needed, questioning and disrupting established structures and views.</p> <p><b>Hope and Optimism</b><br/>Building and sustaining a shared belief in our capacity to create a more just, inclusive, and sustainable future.</p> <p><b>Conscious Use of Resources</b><br/>Acting with awareness of the planet's limited natural resources, prioritizing conservation, regeneration, and frugality to avoid harmful consumption.</p> <p><b>Proactivity</b><br/>Practicing future-oriented, accountable stewardship in the face of urgent challenges, grounded in solidarity and care for human dignity and the living Earth.</p> <p><b>Resilience</b><br/>Navigating adversity with agility, staying engaged, and persevering even when progress is slow or uncertain.</p> |

Figure 1. The 25 skills and qualities in the Inner Development Guide (2025)

# Being – Developing Our Inner Life

Deepening our awareness of inner experiences and their dynamic relationship with the world around us nurtures embodied presence, clarity of purpose, and thoughtful responses when we face complexity.

## 1. Inner Compass

*A deeply felt commitment to live and act in accordance with values and purposes that serve the good of the whole.*

Having an "inner compass" is not a skill in the traditional sense, but rather a consequence of having developed a well-developed contextual awareness that has led to a deep motivation to care for and contribute to the welfare of something much greater than oneself.<sup>4</sup> This greater whole can be perceived in different ways: humanity, the global ecosystem, future generations, or specific global issues such as climate change, environmental problems, public health, or human rights.

The concept of an inner compass refers to how people prioritise when making decisions and taking action. A stable inner compass rooted in values relating to a larger whole means taking the greater good into account in different situations. This requires a deep sense of commitment – not just an intellectual understanding, but a deeper rootedness that influences how one actually lives and acts.

In the first IDG survey, respondents listed concepts that can be related to the inner compass, such as being grounded in ethical values, passion for the whole, caring for others, solidarity and determination.

Having an inner compass that is firmly rooted in a commitment to contributing to the whole is closely linked to other skills and qualities in the IDG framework, particularly belonging, long-term orientation and vision, and perseverance. When this quality is well developed, the person feels a genuine responsibility to live and act in ways that best serve the whole, even when it involves personal sacrifice or difficult choices.

## 2. Integrity and authenticity

*A sincere commitment to honesty and firmly grounded values, expressed and embodied in action.*

This quality is partly about values that one has identified with and is committed to practising, but it is also strongly related to personal maturity. In order to act with sincerity, honesty and integrity, a person must be very aware of their inner processes (reactions, feelings, identifications – see the section on self-awareness below) and have a robust sense of self that gives them the ability to be open and vulnerable.

Integrity and authenticity mean that there is a sincere commitment – not just a superficial intention – to honesty. It is also about having firmly established values, which means values that you truly believe in and do not just adapt to what currently seems advantageous or convenient. The most important thing is that these values are expressed and embodied in action: it is not enough to talk about values, they must also be lived out in practice.

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<sup>4</sup> However, there are other views on the inner compass, e.g. that it is about identifying with the moral order that is already established in the world we live in. Such a view is central to many religious worldviews. Several examples of different views can be found in the essays on the website [idg.thomasjordan.se](http://idg.thomasjordan.se). See, for example, those based on the views of Australian indigenous peoples, conservative Christians and Confucianism.

In order to maintain integrity and authenticity, a person must have developed a significant degree of self-awareness and self-acceptance. If one's self-esteem depends on identifying with a certain self-image, or if one's sense of stability and security is linked to a need to defend a certain set of beliefs and values, then there is probably a need for psychological defence mechanisms that can inhibit the ability to act with genuine integrity.

Integrity and authenticity are related to several other qualities in the IDG framework, particularly self-awareness, openness and learning mindset, presence and inner compass.

### **3. Openness and Learning Mindset**

*A curious, adaptive attitude expressed through willingness to exchange perspectives, be vulnerable, welcome change, and grow.*

The ability to be open to learning, re-evaluation and curiosity about alternative ways of perceiving and interpreting different issues requires a significant degree of resilience. If one's sense of self depends on identifying with a certain self-image, or if one's sense of stability and security is linked to a need to defend a certain set of beliefs and values, then there is probably a need for psychological defence mechanisms that can inhibit the ability to remain open and curious when encountering unfamiliar or divergent opinions or events.

The new description emphasises that openness and learning mindset are fundamental attitudes characterised by curiosity and adaptability. It is not just about being open intellectually, but about a willingness to actually exchange perspectives with others, to be vulnerable (which means daring to show oneself and acknowledge one's limitations), to welcome change (rather than resist it) and to have a genuine desire to grow and develop.

Openness and Learning Mindset should therefore not only be regarded as “skills” that can be trained in isolation, but are intimately linked to adult development processes that encompass the whole self. Openness is also one of the personality traits included in the five-factor theory of personality differences.

In the first IDG survey, some respondents mentioned characteristics that can be linked to the ability to be open-minded, such as tolerance for ambiguity, uncertainty and discomfort, a growth mindset and the willingness to let go of existing patterns.

Openness and Learning Mindset are strongly related to critical thinking, systems thinking, perspective-taking, humility, creativity and communication skills.

### **4. Self-awareness**

*Ability to be in reflective contact with thoughts, emotions, desires, and actions; to maintain a realistic self-image and to regulate oneself.*

What happens inside a person has a significant impact on their ability to be effective in complex situations, especially when interacting with people with different perspectives and interests. Challenging situations trigger emotional and cognitive reactions. If a person is not consciously and reflectively in touch with these reactions, their ability to deal with them constructively is limited, and they may act on emotions, defensive reactions and hasty conclusions without realising that this is happening.

Self-awareness means being aware of emotional, cognitive and volitional (as well as other internal psychological) processes as they occur (or shortly thereafter). The new description emphasises that

self-awareness is about the ability to be in reflective contact – not just passively registering what is happening inside, but actively reflecting on it.

Self-awareness also includes the ability to be in touch with thoughts, feelings, desires and actions. It is therefore not just about feelings (emotional awareness) but about a broader spectrum of inner experiences. Maintaining a realistic self-image is an important component – this means having a self-image that corresponds to reality, rather than an idealised or distorted image of oneself.

Finally, self-awareness includes the ability to regulate oneself. Being in touch with and understanding one's own inner processes often leads to greater self-acceptance, less need to cling to an idealised self-image and thus less need for psychological defence mechanisms. A well-developed capacity for self-awareness makes it possible to actively manage the relationship between internal (spontaneous) processes and the expectations and needs associated with a particular role or function that the person has.

Several phrases related to the self were mentioned by respondents in the original survey: self-reflection, self-care, self-acceptance, self-leadership, and personal integration of mind, body, and soul.

Self-awareness is closely linked to presence, humility, integrity and authenticity, as well as openness and learning mindset.

## **5. Presence**

*Capacity to be fully present in the here and now, to accept reality as it unfolds, and to respond in meaningful ways.*

This ability is strongly linked to openness and learning mindset, but emphasises the quality of making oneself fully available in encounters with other people and with reality, in an accepting, attentive, responsive and non-judgmental way.

The new description highlights two key aspects of presence: firstly, it is about being fully present in the here and now – not distracted by thoughts of the past or future, not absorbed by mental processes that take you away from the immediate moment. Secondly, it is about accepting reality as it is – not as one would like it to be or think it should be, but encountering it as it actually is in this moment.

The third element – respond to reality in meaningful ways – means that presence is not passivity. It is about being fully present and accepting, while actively and consciously choosing how to relate to and act in the situation.

This quality can partly be regarded as a skill that can be trained through mindfulness exercises and other contemplative practices. However, a well-developed ability to be present also depends on being relatively free from the need to project and defend a certain self-image (looking good in the eyes of others) or a psychological need to maintain the stability of a certain worldview that provides a sense of security.

Presence is closely related to self-awareness, humility, openness and learning mindset, as well as integrity and authenticity.

# Thinking – Understanding Our Complex World

Expanding clarity, considering diverse perspectives, and imagining long-term consequences help us navigate complexity and make wiser decisions in our interconnected world.

## 6. Critical thinking

*Ability to reflect on the validity of ideas, evidence, assumptions and plans.*

Critical thinking is a concept that has taken on different meanings and areas of application. It is strongly related to the concepts of "reflective judgment" or "skills of argument", concepts that have been extensively researched (see in particular King & Kitchener, 1994, and Kuhn, 1991; see also Dawson, 2020-2021, which describes micro-competencies in detail).

One way to describe critical thinking skills is to focus on the habit of asking probing questions in connection with statements, perceptions, opinions and views. The new description emphasises that critical thinking is about the ability to reflect on validity – not just automatically accepting or rejecting ideas, but actively investigating whether they hold true. This applies to several different types of mental content: ideas (abstract concepts and thoughts), evidence (proof and supporting data), assumptions (what is taken for granted) and plans (proposals for action).

Critical thinking involves regularly asking questions such as:

- Are there strong reasons to believe that the statements are valid?
- What other facts might be relevant to a balanced interpretation?
- What consequences must be true if the statements are true?
- What other views or interpretations might be reasonable and valid in this matter?
- What arguments do people use to support their opinions, and how credible are these arguments?
- Could there be circumstances that have not yet been considered and that could mean that the proposed argument is not entirely valid?

A related concept mentioned by respondents was variations on the theme of "evidence-based practice", i.e. striving to use methods that have been proven to work well, rather than just doing what comes to mind or what has always been done.

Critical thinking is strongly related to and partly overlaps with perspective skills, systems thinking, openness and learning mindset.

## 7. Perspective Skills

*Ability to learn from diverse perspectives and integrate insights into reflective sense-making and action.*

This skill can be seen as a family of abilities ranging from fairly basic to highly sophisticated (and quite rare) skills. The new description emphasises that this involves multiple abilities – it is not a single skill but a spectrum of related competencies.

A basic perspective skill is simply being aware that one's view of the world and its issues and events is one perspective among many possible ones: an interpretation based on a limited and selective set of information and expanded with one's own assumptions and conclusions that are not necessarily supported by proven facts.

More sophisticated perspective skills involve a strong awareness of the enduring, complex and systematic patterns in perspectives, both one's own and those of others. This means an awareness that one's own perspective is necessarily incomplete and has blind spots, which in turn generally leads to an open and inquiring attitude.

The new description highlights two important processes: firstly, learning from different perspectives – which involves an active willingness and ability to seek out, understand and actually absorb insights from perspectives that differ from one's own. Secondly, integrating these insights into reflective meaning-making and action – in other words, it is not enough to simply be aware of other perspectives; one must actively use them when trying to understand complex issues and when deciding how to act.

A person with well-developed perspective awareness is generally open and curious and can actively seek out and try to understand perspectives that differ greatly from their own, and then use several different perspectives to understand issues and processes. Theo Dawson (2020–2021) has described a large number of concrete micro-skills that contribute to the ability to work fruitfully with multiple perspectives.

Perspective abilities are related to openness and learning mindset, meaning-making (which will be discussed under the category Relate), systems thinking, critical thinking, and an inclusive mindset and intercultural competence.

## **8. Systems thinking**

*Ability to understand complexity and work with the interconnections and properties of systems.*

This skill was previously called "complexity awareness" but has been given the more specific name of systems thinking in the updated version of IDG.<sup>5</sup> This reflects a shift from a general awareness of complexity to a more specific ability to think in terms of systems.

System thinking is primarily about the ability to understand complexity – not just knowing that something is complex, but actually being able to understand and work with complex relationships and causal relationships. The new description particularly emphasises the ability to see connections and patterns in living systems. This is an important clarification: it is not just about abstract or mechanical systems, but about living systems – which can include ecological systems, social systems, organisational systems and other systems characterised by self-organisation, adaptation and development.

Complexity can be related to underlying and diverse causal relationships and circumstances that influence a particular issue. Complexity can also be related to interdependencies between different factors, which cannot be properly understood using simple causal relationships that focus on only one type of factor.

A very important aspect of systems thinking is the tendency to look for patterns in wholes, how parts of systems interact in complex ways, leading to system dynamics and emergent properties in systems. There are many types of systems: ecological, social, cultural, economic, legal, organisational, cognitive, and so on. Systems thinking goes beyond thinking in terms of unidirectional and even multivariate cause-and-effect relationships and takes into account dynamics that cannot be understood without considering systemic patterns and relationships.

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<sup>5</sup> Personally, I would have liked to keep the name "complexity awareness", but there was a strong signal in the survey responses that people wanted the framework to give a prominent place to "systems thinking".

Related concepts that were mentioned in the survey responses were holistic thinking, strategic thinking, dialectical thinking, polarity thinking and the ability to synthesise. Systems thinking is a first step in developing awareness of complexity, but actual skills in analysing, synthesising, developing and implementing strategies for dealing with complex issues are, of course, of central importance.

System thinking is an important prerequisite for genuine openness and learning mindset, as one can always expect there to be circumstances that one is not yet aware of. Systems thinking is strongly linked to critical thinking and perspective skills.

## **9. Long-term orientation and vision**

*Imagining long-term goals and staying committed to them in ways that support broader societal and ecological well-being.*

It is clear that complex global issues, such as those described in the UN's Agenda 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, involve long-term processes of change in terms of climate, environmental problems, socio-economic structures, the world order and so on. Problems caused or conditioned by the characteristics and dynamics of highly complex systems can rarely be solved quickly, but require long-term efforts involving a variety of measures and strategies.

The new description emphasises two key components: firstly, the ability to imagine long-term goals – which requires both imagination and the ability to think beyond the immediate and short term. Secondly, sticking to these goals – it is not enough to formulate a vision, one must also be able to maintain commitment to it over time.

An important clarification in the new description is that this should be done in a way that strengthens both human and ecological well-being. This means that long-term goals cannot be focused solely on, for example, economic growth or technological development, but must take into account both human well-being and the health of ecosystems. It is an integrated view in which these two aspects are seen as interdependent rather than contradictory.

Actors with strategic roles in complex, long-term issues need to have a very long time horizon when it comes to understanding patterns of long-term processes that create problems, formulating visions, and designing and implementing measures to influence the development of complex systems. A long-term orientation and vision are strongly related to and dependent on systems thinking, inner compass, perseverance and proactivity.

## **10. Creativity**

*Ability to think outside conventional patterns, imagine new possibilities, and shape them into transformative ideas.*

Creativity has been moved to the Thinking category in the updated version of IDG (it was previously under Acting).<sup>6</sup>

The new description highlights three important aspects of creativity: firstly, the ability to think beyond the conventional – which means not being bound by established patterns of thought, norms or assumptions about 'how things are usually done'. Secondly, imagining new possibilities – creativity is not just about criticising the existing, but about actively imagining alternatives. Thirdly,

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<sup>6</sup> This was done partly in order to keep the symmetry of five skills and qualities in each of the main dimensions. Creativity could certainly also be placed in the Acting dimension.

shaping these possibilities into transformative ideas and actions – creativity is not just imaginative thoughts, but includes the ability to actually develop these thoughts into concrete ideas and actions that can change reality.

Creativity is not a skill in the narrow sense, nor is it a cognitive ability that anyone can develop to a high level through specific exercises. However, there is reason to believe that creativity is linked to developmental processes in adulthood. A common distinction in adult development theory is to differentiate between preconventional, conventional and postconventional patterns of meaning-making (see, for example, Cook-Greuter, 1999).

Conventional meaning-making is a type of meaning-making that is associated with accepting prevailing norms and practices as given, rather than exploring alternative possibilities, while post-conventional meaning-making involves an independent vision of what is desirable and how it can be achieved. A highly developed ability to think systemically involves the habit of exploring and seeking to understand causal relationships and possibilities for alternative scenarios. People with strong systemic thinking skills tend not to take existing conditions and patterns for granted, but often imagine how things could be if they were done differently.

Other skills and qualities in the IDG framework that are related to creativity are openness and learning mindset, perspective, courage and, when creativity is seen as a collective phenomenon, the ability to collaborate and other social skills.

# Relating – Caring for Others and the World

Connecting with kindness, compassion, and a sense of shared belonging to communities, the living planet, and future generations helps us to create a more just, inclusive, and flourishing world.

## 11. Appreciation

*Relating to people and planet Earth with a deep sense of gratitude, positive regard, and joy.*

Being able to have a solid appreciative attitude is not a skill in the traditional sense, but rather a way of relating to people and the social, material and natural world that can be strengthened through conscious focus. A fundamental appreciative attitude helps to create contact and trust between people, which promotes creative and collaborative work towards important goals.

The new description emphasises that appreciation is about relating to people and planet Earth – not just to certain selected people or aspects of the world, but a broad ability to see value and beauty in existence. This comes with a deep sense of gratitude, positive regard, and joy – not a superficial or artificial positivity, but a deeply rooted ability to feel and express appreciation.

Several survey respondents mentioned the importance of valuing and appreciating nature as a basis for feeling committed to protecting the natural environment from damage. This highlights an important connection: when we develop a deep appreciation for something, we are also more motivated to care for and protect it.

There is reason to believe that there is a link between later stages of adult development and the propensity and ability to be grounded in an appreciative attitude (Cook-Greuter, 1999). The less someone is preoccupied with defending a positive self-image and the less preoccupied they are with fixed ideas about projects and ideas, the easier it is to appreciate positive qualities in different situations.

Gratitude and joy are also mentioned relatively often in the survey responses. These are qualities that probably have subtle but important effects in terms of inspiring other people and shifting attention away from depressing realities to what is worthy of gratitude and appreciation, which mobilises energy for creative engagement.

Appreciation is related to humility, openness and learning mindset, presence, and can be an important factor for mobilisation, hope and optimism.

## 12. Connectedness

*Feeling a sense of belonging to a larger whole, such as humanity, the planet's web of life, and the spiritual dimensions of existence.*

This is one of the qualities in the IDG framework that is most deeply connected to one's perceived identity. It is about feeling connected to and experiencing oneself as part of a much larger whole. This sense of belonging more or less automatically leads to motivation to care about the well-being of the larger whole.

The new description specifies three possible levels or aspects of belonging: first, humanity – feeling part of the human family regardless of national, cultural or other boundaries. Secondly, the web of life on the planet – feeling a deep sense of belonging with all living beings and ecosystems. Thirdly, the spiritual dimensions of existence – which opens up a more transcendent or contemplative

dimension of belonging.

Connectedness is not to be regarded as a specific skill that is the result of training. There are probably quite different ways of feeling this kind of belonging, from the more pure and immediate feelings of being one with everything else, which can be experienced in advanced meditation or evoked by certain contemplative practices, to more cognitively based forms of connectedness related to holistic/systemic meaning-making, based on knowledge of the interconnection between all living beings and the physical environment.

Connectedness is strongly linked to a commitment to participate in activities that contribute to positive outcomes for the "greater whole". This makes belonging a central quality for maintaining motivation and commitment when working on complex, long-term global issues.

Connectedness is linked to many other skills and qualities in the IDG framework, both those that enable the feeling of belonging to arise and those that follow from the feeling of belonging: systems thinking, inner compass, appreciation, empathy and compassion, humility and inclusive mindset and intercultural competence.

### **13. Humility**

*Being able to respond to the needs of the situation without concern for one's own importance.*

Humility here means the ability to act without being preoccupied with the need to look good in the eyes of others or even in one's own eyes. A humble attitude is a consequence of not being (too) identified with a certain self-image and a need to be confirmed in this self-image by others.

The new description emphasises that humility is about the ability to respond to the needs of the situation – the focus is therefore on what the situation actually requires, rather than on oneself. This is without attaching importance to one's own significance – which does not mean denying one's competence or value, but rather not allowing one's self-image or ego to control how one acts.

This can be a result of a realistic and accepting awareness of one's own limitations and other personality traits. Being more or less free from the need to maintain a certain self-image means that when you act, you can focus entirely on the needs of the situation, rather than being preoccupied with projecting a certain image of yourself, for example as an expert or authority.

This makes it easier to be open, responsive and respectful towards others. Humility is particularly important in complex situations where there may be many different forms of expertise and experience that need to be utilised. A person who is preoccupied with maintaining an image of themselves as the most knowledgeable or competent may find it difficult to truly listen to and learn from others.

Humility is related to openness and learning mindset, self-awareness, belonging, empathy and compassion, presence and an inclusive mindset, and intercultural competence.

### **14. Empathy and compassion**

*Connecting to others, oneself, and nature with kindness, care, and love, guided by the intention to reduce suffering.*

We have chosen to use both empathy and compassion as concepts with slightly different connotations. There are different conceptualisations in the literature, and it may be wise to stick to definitions that are fairly open.

Empathy here refers to the ability to understand and sense relatively well what other people feel and experience. The new description extends this to include not only other people but also oneself (self-compassion is an important component of emotional health) and nature (the ability to relate to nature with empathy and care).

Compassion means wanting to be kind and friendly towards others. The new description emphasises that this is done with kindness, care and love – in other words, more than just intellectual understanding. Particularly important is the addition that this is guided by the intention to reduce suffering – compassion is therefore not passive, but involves an active motivation to alleviate and prevent suffering.

Empathy and compassion are, of course, important components of emotional intelligence (see, for example, Eklund & Meranius, 2021). These qualities are fundamental to building trusting relationships, collaborating effectively across boundaries of various kinds, and maintaining motivation to work for the well-being of others and the world. Related concepts mentioned in the survey were goodwill, kindness and love.

Empathy and compassion are related to belonging, appreciation, humility, communication skills, and forgiveness.

## **15. Forgiveness**

*Willingness to transcend hostility, work through trauma, and create space for healing.*

Forgiveness is a new quality in the updated version of the IDG framework. This is a complex and multifaceted ability that is deeply relevant to work on many of the global challenges we face, where historical conflicts, injustices and traumas often constitute barriers to constructive collaboration and progress.

Forgiveness should not be misunderstood as naivety, as turning a blind eye to injustice or accepting unacceptable behaviour. Nor is it about forgetting what has happened or underestimating the need for accountability and redress. Instead, forgiveness in this context is about the willingness to transcend hostility – to make a conscious choice not to be caught up in patterns of retaliation and resistance that prevent progress, and a willingness to transcend hostility – to make a conscious choice not to get caught up in patterns of retaliation and resistance that prevent progress.

A key aspect is to process trauma – both at the individual and collective levels. Unprocessed trauma, whether personal or collective (historical injustices, conflicts between groups, structural violence), can create patterns of reaction that hinder or prevent the cooperation needed to address complex challenges. The ability to process such trauma – by acknowledging it, understanding its impact and gradually freeing oneself from its grip – is therefore of central importance.

The third element – creating space for healing – emphasises that forgiveness is not only an individual inner process, but can also create new opportunities in relationships and in collectives. By overcoming hostility and processing trauma, one can open up space for healing relationships, restoring trust and building new cooperation.

When working with complex global issues, we often encounter situations where different groups or nations have historical conflicts, where there is deep mistrust based on past experiences of injustice, or where trauma from the past affects the ability to cooperate in the present. In such contexts, the ability to forgive – both on an individual and collective level – can be crucial to moving forward.

This does not mean that everyone has to agree on everything or that everyone has to become friends,

but rather that ways can be found to work together despite historical differences. It is about being able to distinguish people from their actions, to see the possibility of change and development, and to prioritise the future over the past when necessary in order to achieve important common goals.

Forgiveness is closely linked to empathy and compassion, humility, hope and optimism, and resilience. It often also requires a significant degree of courage and self-awareness, as it can mean confronting painful feelings and memories.

# Collaborate – Building Trust and Working Together

Developing relationships of trust, acknowledging diverse values, skills, and perspectives, and creating safe spaces enables everyone to contribute to shared purposes and collective impact.

## 16. Relationship-building skills

*Nurturing relationships with emotional intelligence grounded in trust, respect, mutual understanding, and a spirit of collaboration.*

Relationship-building skills are a new component in the updated version of the IDG framework, which integrates what was previously described as "trust" with a broader set of relational competencies. This reflects an understanding that the ability to build and maintain good relationships is fundamental to any effective collaboration on complex issues.

The new description emphasises that relationship building is done with emotional intelligence – which means awareness of and the ability to manage both one's own and others' emotions in constructive ways. This is particularly important in complex and sometimes conflict-ridden contexts where emotions can run high and where the ability to navigate the emotional dimensions of collaboration is crucial.

Relationship building is based on trust – the ability to both show trust and act in ways that create and maintain trust in others. This is not naive trust, but a conscious and strategic ability to approach relationships with the ambition to create as much trust as possible, given the circumstances. This means acting in ways that strengthen trust: by being open, conveying goodwill, being reliable and consistent in one's actions.

Respect is another key component – the ability to genuinely respect other people, their perspectives, experiences and skills, even when they differ significantly from your own. This means treating others as equal partners rather than as objects to be manipulated or controlled.

Mutual understanding indicates that relationship building is a two-way process. It is not only about understanding others, but also about making oneself understood and creating a common basis for communication and cooperation. This often requires patience, time and a willingness to invest in really getting to know each other.

Finally, a spirit of cooperation is emphasised – a fundamental attitude that views relationships as opportunities for mutual learning and joint creation rather than as arenas for competition or power games.

Relationship-building skills can be described in terms of certain concrete behaviours, such as conveying positive intentions and consideration, listening attentively and actively, asking genuinely interested questions, and sharing one's own vulnerability in appropriate ways. However, without a more fundamental foundation in values and psychological maturity, simply practising certain behaviours may not lead to genuine connection, trust, psychological security, and fruitful relationships.

The ability to get other people to trust you can be used for both good and destructive purposes, so relationship-building skills must be linked to other skills and qualities, such as empathy, compassion, integrity and authenticity, as well as an inner compass rooted in values that promote the greater good.

Relationship-building skills are related to presence, humility, communication skills, empathy and compassion, co-creation skills, and self-awareness.

## **17. Inclusive Mindset and Intercultural Competence**

*Willingness and competence to embrace diversity and include people and communities with different perspectives and backgrounds.*

Here we have brought together attitudes and skills. The new description emphasises both willingness and competence – in other words, good intentions are not enough, you also need actual skills, and conversely, skills are not enough if the willingness is lacking.

Being actively interested in seeking out, considering and involving individuals and groups with different backgrounds, identities and opinions is one facet. The new wording emphasises that it is about embracing diversity – not just tolerating or accepting differences, but actively valuing and welcoming them as a resource and an asset.

More specifically, working in international and intercultural contexts means that differences in culturally rooted norms, values, attitudes, expectations and behaviour patterns play an important role in successful cooperation. Intercultural competence requires awareness that there may be significant intercultural differences. It can also be helpful to have some familiarity with common cultural differences, for example in terms of views on power and hierarchies, gender roles, low- and high-context communication, and forms of decision-making (see, for example, Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2011; Meyer, 2014).

One particular aspect of an inclusive approach mentioned in the survey was the interest in seeking out, listening to and adapting to local knowledge. This is particularly important in work on global issues, where solutions often need to be adapted to local conditions and where local expertise is invaluable.

Another aspect of an inclusive approach is the readiness and willingness to share power with the actors with whom one collaborates. This can be particularly challenging in situations where there are historical or structural power asymmetries, but it is often necessary in order to create genuinely inclusive and equitable collaborations.

An inclusive mindset and intercultural competence are related to perspective skills, openness and learning mindset, humility, communication skills, relationship-building skills, empathy and compassion.

## **18. Co-creation skills**

*Facilitating collaborative processes with diverse stakeholders, fostering teamwork and psychological safety, and being aware of power dynamics.*

The choice of the term "co-creation" was made after extensive discussions in various constellations. In the first survey, "collaboration" was often mentioned, but we ultimately chose "co-creation" because the term emphasises the creative and generative aspect of cooperation. The new description, which uses the plural form "co-creation skills," emphasises that this is a family of related competencies.

It is clear that co-creation skills encompass a large number of sub-skills and overlap with several other skills and characteristics in the IDG framework. The new description highlights three particularly important aspects:

Firstly, facilitating collaborative processes with different actors. This emphasises a more active and facilitating role – it is not just about being good at collaborating yourself, but about being able to create the conditions for others to collaborate effectively. "Different actors" emphasises that this often means working with people and groups who have very different backgrounds, interests, skills and perspectives.

Secondly, to promote teamwork and psychological safety. Psychological safety – a concept popularised by Amy Edmondson – is about creating an atmosphere where people dare to be open, ask questions, acknowledge uncertainty and take risks without fear of being ridiculed or punished. This is crucial for creative and innovative collaboration.

Thirdly, be aware of power dynamics. This is an important addition that recognises that collaboration never takes place in a power-free vacuum. There are always dynamics related to different forms of power – formal authority, expert power, resource control, social status, etc. – and the ability to be aware of and constructively manage these dynamics is central to genuine co-creation.

The focus here is on skills for creating favourable conditions for and facilitating productive collaboration and co-creation. Sub-competencies include skills in creating an open climate characterised by psychological safety, leading meetings in a way that structures the work process through a shared focus, encourages creativity and openness to different contributions, and dissolves power dynamics that hinder open and creative collaboration.

We chose not to address change management skills separately, as mentioned several times in the survey, but the concept definitely deserves special attention when designing competence development programmes.

There is a very extensive literature on co-creation, not least when it comes to facilitation and methods for dealing with complex issues. Co-creation skills are strongly linked to communication skills, an inclusive mindset and intercultural competence, relationship-building skills, mobilisation skills, openness and learning mindset, and perspective skills.

## **19. Communication skills**

*Ability to listen deeply, foster genuine dialogue, advocate one's views skillfully, manage conflicts constructively and adapt communication to diverse groups.*

Communication skills can be described in terms of certain concrete behaviours, but without a more fundamental anchoring in values and psychological maturity, it may be that only engaging in certain behaviours does not lead to genuine contact, trust, psychological security and fruitful dialogue.

The new description highlights five key dimensions of communication skills:

First, listening deeply – not just hearing the words that are said, but really trying to understand the underlying meaning, feelings and perspectives behind the words. This requires presence, openness and a willingness to temporarily set aside one's own agendas and reactions.

Secondly, promoting genuine dialogue – this goes beyond ordinary conversation or debate and is about creating space for a real exchange where all parties both share and receive, where understanding deepens and new insights can emerge.

Thirdly, expressing one's views skilfully – it is not enough to have good ideas, one must also be able to communicate them in a way that others can receive them. This means choosing the right time, tone and wording, being clear without being aggressive, and being able to make one's argu-

ments understandable to different target groups.

Fourthly, managing conflicts constructively – conflicts are inevitable in collaboration on complex issues where different perspectives and interests meet. The ability to manage such conflicts in ways that lead to learning and development rather than escalation and paralysis is therefore central.

Fifthly, adapting communication to different groups – awareness of other people's potentially very different patterns of meaning-making, due to different cultural backgrounds, professional training, political worldviews and previous life experiences, is necessary in order to recognise the need to adapt communication behaviours to varying circumstances.

The survey mentioned conflict management and the ability to engage in storytelling as important skills. We chose to include these skills in the category of communication skills.

There is a very extensive literature on communication, conflict management and storytelling. Some classic references on communication are Rosenberg (1999) on non-violent communication, Fisher & Ury (1981) on principled negotiation and Bohm (2004) on dialogue.

Communication skills are strongly linked to several other skills and qualities: presence, humility, perspective skills, openness and learning mindset, inclusive mindset and intercultural competence, relationship-building skills, empathy and compassion, and co-creation skills.

## **20. Mobilization Skills**

*Inspiring and enabling others to engage in shared purposes and collective action.*

Mobilization skills naturally overlap with co-creation skills, but deserve separate treatment because mobilisation involves reaching out to diverse groups of people, arousing their interest and offering effective ways for people to actively participate in different types of work to achieve goals related to sustainable development and other pressing global issues.

The new description, which uses the plural form "mobilisation skills", emphasises that this is a family of related competencies. Two key aspects are highlighted:

Firstly, inspiring others – this is about the ability to communicate a vision or purpose in ways that engage and motivate people. This may involve using storytelling, showing passion and commitment, clarifying why something is important and how it connects to people's own values and interests.

Secondly, enabling others to get involved – it is not enough to inspire, you also have to create concrete opportunities for people to actually participate and contribute. This may involve structuring work so that there are different entry points for participation, lowering thresholds, offering support and resources, and creating meaningful roles where people can make a difference.

The new wording also emphasises common goals and collective action – mobilisation is not about getting people to follow a leader's agenda, but about creating a common understanding of goals and a sense of shared ownership of the work to be done.

Like many other skills and qualities, mobilisation skills can be used for constructive or destructive purposes and must therefore be guided by an inner compass imbued with goodwill and responsibility for the whole.

Many of the other skills and qualities included in the IDG framework contribute to the ability to

mobilise people for meaningful engagement, such as communication skills (not least storytelling), co-creation skills, relationship-building skills, an inclusive mindset and intercultural competence, hope and optimism, and long-term orientation and vision.

# Acting – Leading and Enabling Change

Moving forward with courage and optimism, building collective agency, and acting with purpose and persistence turns visions into meaningful change in uncertain times.

## 21. Courage

*Standing up for fundamental values, making decisions, taking action and, when needed, questioning and disrupting established structures and views.*

Courage is another part of the IDG framework that cannot easily be considered a skill in the narrow sense, but which is nevertheless a trait that can be nurtured and developed through various strategies. Here, we have brought together several related aspects of courage.

The new description highlights four important dimensions: firstly, standing up for fundamental values – this requires both clarity about what one's values actually are and the courage to act in accordance with them even when it is uncomfortable or involves risks.

Secondly, making decisions – in complex situations involving uncertainty, it can be tempting to postpone decisions or avoid taking a stand. Courage means the ability to make decisions even when you do not have all the information you would like, and to take responsibility for the consequences of those decisions.

Thirdly, take action – it is not enough to have the courage to decide, you must also have the courage to actually act, to move from thought and intention to concrete action.

Fourthly, when necessary, question and break down established structures and ways of thinking. This is a particularly important aspect of courage in relation to working with complex global challenges. Many of the problems we face are largely created or perpetuated by existing structures, systems and ideas about how things should be. Changing these often requires the courage to challenge established practices, power structures and deeply rooted assumptions.

Courage also means a willingness to question deeply rooted patterns, approaches and practices in order to open up opportunities for creativity and change. This can be particularly challenging as it often means standing outside the consensus and risking criticism or resistance.

Courage in itself is not necessarily a positive trait, but must be guided by goodwill, systems thinking, critical thinking and commitment to the greater good. History provides many examples of courage being used for destructive purposes. It is therefore the combination of courage and a well-founded inner compass that is crucial.

Courage is related to integrity and authenticity, inner compass, proactivity, creativity and resilience.

## 22. Hope and optimism

*Building and sustaining a shared belief in our capacity to create a more just, inclusive, and sustainable future.*

The new description of hope and optimism has a significant shift compared to the previous version. It emphasises that this is about developing and maintaining – that is, both creating and sustaining over time – a shared belief. The fact that it is shared is significant: it is not just about one's own personal sense of hope, but about the ability to contribute to and participate in a collective sense

that change is possible.

Hope and optimism in this context are not naive positivity or a refusal to see reality as it is. Instead, it is about a realistic but hopeful attitude that acknowledges the challenges while focusing on the opportunities and our ability to create change.

The new wording also specifies what this hope and optimism are focused on: creating a more just, inclusive and sustainable future. This is not hope in an abstract sense, but hope specifically linked to the values that are central to working with global challenges.

Optimism can be considered a personality trait, but in this context, the emphasis is on the ability to inspire others (and oneself) with hope that it is possible to achieve meaningful results by focusing on what is achievable. One aspect of this is the skill of helping people to direct their attention, in this case towards opportunities rather than focusing solely on depressing realities.

However, this does not mean turning a blind eye to or denying problems and challenges. On the contrary, genuine hope and optimism require a realistic understanding of the situation. It is about the ability to see both the challenges and the opportunities, and to focus energy and attention on what can be done rather than allowing oneself to be paralysed by the scale of the problems.

Hope and optimism are closely related to appreciation, mobilisation skills, long-term orientation and vision, resilience and forgiveness.

### **23. Conscious use of resources**

*Acting with awareness of the planet's limited natural resources, prioritizing conservation, regeneration, and frugality to avoid harmful consumption.*

Conscious use of resources is a new component in the updated version of the IDG framework. This is a quality that is deeply relevant to work on sustainability issues and climate challenges, but which also has broader implications for how we relate to material resources and consumption in general.

The new description highlights several important aspects: firstly, acting with awareness of the planet's limited natural resources. This implies a fundamental understanding that we live on a planet with finite resources and that our current way of using these resources is not sustainable in the long term. This awareness is not just intellectual knowledge, but should permeate how we actually act and make decisions.

Secondly, prioritising conservation, restoration and thriftiness. These three concepts represent different aspects of a sustainable approach to resources. Conservation is about protecting and preserving what we have, not wasting or destroying it. Restoration points to the importance of repairing what has been damaged – not just slowing down destruction, but actively working to heal and regenerate ecosystems and resources. Thriftiness means an approach that values simplicity and moderation, that questions the need for constant consumption and growth.

Thirdly, avoiding harmful consumption. This is the goal of conscious resource use – not consumption itself, but harmful consumption. This recognises that some consumption is necessary and legitimate, while much of our current consumption causes damage to ecosystems, the climate and other people.

Conscious resource use is not just an individual practice, although personal choices naturally play a role. It is also about making decisions at the organisational and systemic level that take into account resource constraints and ecological consequences. This may involve designing products

and processes that minimise resource use, building circular economic systems, investing in renewable resources, and so on.

This quality often requires courage to challenge established patterns of consumption and production. It also requires systems thinking to understand the complex relationships between resource use, ecological systems and human well-being. Creativity is needed to find new ways to meet human needs with less resource use.

Conscious resource use is related to connectedness (with nature and future generations), systems thinking, long-term orientation and vision, the inner compass, proactivity and critical thinking.

## **24. Proactivity**

*Practicing future-oriented, accountable stewardship in the face of urgent challenges, grounded in solidarity and care for human dignity and the living Earth.*

Proactivity is a new component in the updated version of the IDG framework. This is an important quality that emphasises decisiveness and forward-looking responsibility rather than reactivity or passivity.

The new description highlights several key aspects: firstly, exercising forward-looking, responsible stewardship. The concept of stewardship means seeing oneself as a steward rather than an owner – one has a responsibility to care for and nurture something that is greater than oneself and that also belongs to future generations. The fact that this stewardship is future-oriented means that it is not just a matter of dealing with current problems, but of actively working to create better conditions for the future.

Secondly, it is emphasised that this is happening in the face of urgent challenges. Proactivity does not mean having all the time in the world, but acting with a sense of urgency and an understanding that many of the challenges we face require swift action, even if the long-term solutions will take time.

Thirdly, it is based on solidarity and care. Solidarity means a sense of community and mutual responsibility – an understanding that we are interconnected and that what happens to other people and other parts of the world also affects us. Care is twofold: care for human dignity and care for our living planet. This emphasises that human well-being and ecological health are not opposites, but interdependent.

Proactivity contrasts with reactivity – simply responding to problems as they arise – or passivity – waiting for others to act or for problems to resolve themselves. Instead, proactivity means taking initiative, anticipating problems and opportunities, and acting based on long-term values and goals rather than just immediate impulses or external pressures.

When working with complex global challenges, proactivity is crucial. Many of the problems we face – such as climate change, loss of biodiversity, social injustice – have built up over a long period of time and will require extensive changes to address. Waiting until the problems become acute or unbearable is often too late. Proactivity means acting now, based on an understanding of long-term consequences and opportunities.

Proactivity requires several other qualities in the IDG framework: courage to act even when there is uncertainty and resistance, long-term orientation and vision to see beyond the immediate, systems thinking to understand complex causal relationships, and an inner compass to know what is worth working for.

Proactivity is related to courage, long-term orientation and vision, conscious use of resources, the inner compass, systems thinking, resilience and connectedness.

## **25. Resilience**

*Navigating adversity with agility, staying engaged, and persevering even when progress is slow or uncertain.*

The updated description uses the term resilience instead of the previous "perseverance". This implies a slight shift in meaning, although there is considerable overlap. Resilience has a broader and more dynamic meaning than perseverance.

The new description highlights three important aspects: firstly, dealing with adversity with flexibility. This is the core of resilience – it is not just about enduring difficulties (which was more the focus of the previous description), but about the ability to face adversity in a flexible and adaptable way. Agility means being able to adjust your strategies and approaches when things don't work out as planned, rather than stubbornly continuing on the same path or giving up altogether.

Secondly, maintaining commitment. This points to the emotional and motivational aspect of resilience – the ability to maintain commitment and passion even when things are difficult, when you encounter resistance or when results are slow to materialise.

Thirdly, perseverance even when progress is slow or uncertain. This acknowledges the reality faced by many who work on complex global challenges: progress is often slow, sometimes almost imperceptible, and there are rarely any guarantees of success. Resilience means the ability to continue working even under these conditions.

Resilience is not the same as being insensitive or ignoring difficulties. On the contrary, resilience can mean being deeply aware of and emotionally present for the difficulties, but still finding ways to move forward. It can mean taking care of yourself and taking breaks when needed, seeking support from others, celebrating small successes, and reminding yourself why the work is important.

The ability to maintain commitment and resilience can be strengthened by consciously focusing on the opportunities to achieve positive results in the long term, which links resilience to hope and optimism as well as long-term orientation and vision. Resilience is also related to self-awareness (recognising and managing one's own reactions to stress and adversity), belonging (which can provide meaning and motivation even in difficult times), appreciation (the ability to see and value the positive even when things are difficult) and proactivity (taking initiative rather than just reacting).

Resilience is yet another trait that can be constructive or destructive depending on the type of ambitions a person or group has, so it must be linked to other traits and skills, especially the inner compass and care for the whole.

## The nature of the IDG framework

As pointed out in the original report on the first phase of the IDG initiative, the framework is primarily intended to serve a pedagogical purpose. We hope that the creation of the framework will draw attention to the need to develop the skills and qualities required to address complex social issues, generate engagement and stimulate further development. We are well aware that there are deeper patterns in how skills and qualities relate to each other, how they can be divided into sub-skills, and how they can be described and understood more precisely.

Certain skills and qualities are more fundamental and constitute prerequisites for the development of others. There are also theoretical frameworks that describe human development as a holistic process, in which the self and its skills are understood as a "structured whole".<sup>7</sup> However, a more in-depth and detailed analysis of this is beyond the scope of this report and also requires the use of more specific theories (of which there are many, with different characteristics, focuses and limitations). We therefore hope that the IDG framework will be perceived as open and versatile and that it can be developed and adapted in different directions.

Another aspect of the IDG framework is the extent to which we treat competencies and qualities by using individuals as the main unit of analysis, or whether we consider skills and qualities as properties of collectives, e.g. groups, organisations, communities, processes or methods. In the current (provisional) formulation, the collective aspect of skills and qualities has not been treated nearly as it deserves.<sup>8</sup>

In real life, skills and qualities are developed in specific contexts. This works both ways: which skills and qualities are relevant and important varies depending on role, tasks and situational circumstances, while skills and qualities are developed in response to the specific tasks and challenges faced by an individual or a collective. People and organisations working actively to achieve sustainable development goals have very different roles and circumstances, so the profiling of which of the 25 skills and qualities are important to focus on naturally varies depending on the specific case. We have limited systematic knowledge about the match between skills and qualities on the one hand and tasks, roles and specific conditions on the other.

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<sup>7</sup> See also the essay *The Vertical Dimension of Horizontal Capabilities. Understanding the Inner Development Goals through the Lens of Ego Development Theory*, on the website [idg.thomasjordan.se](http://idg.thomasjordan.se).

<sup>8</sup> See the essays on the website [idg.thomasjordan.se](http://idg.thomasjordan.se), e.g. *The Inner Development Guide: From Individual to Collective Capabilities*.

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