

# lassalle institut



Call for papers

# Making hope possible

*3<sup>rd</sup> Biennial International Transdisciplinary Conference  
on Environmental Justice*

**August 25-29, 2024, Switzerland**



Yann Arthus-Bertrand, *La Terre vue du ciel* (Copyright YAB)

**Host:**

Lassalle-Institut, Zug/Zürich (CH)

**Partners** (in alphabetical order):

COMPORTE network (COL); ESSC Institute of Environmental Science for Social Change (PHL); Georgetown University, Washington DC (USA); Institute of Geography, University of Berne (CH); Laudato Si' Research Institute, University of Oxford (UK); Leuphana University of Lüneburg (D); Munich School of Philosophy (D); Newman Institutet (SWE); Universidad Iberoamericana Ciudad de Mexico (MEX); University of Fribourg, Environmental Sciences & Humanities Institute (CH); XIM University, AIESS Centre, Xavier Institute of Management (IND); ZHAW sustainability, Zurich University of Applied Sciences (CH)

The **biennial international transdisciplinary conference** on Environmental Justice at Lassalle-Institute (Switzerland) offers an inter- and transdisciplinary platform for an exchange between engaged scientists and reflective practitioners concerned by social-ecological transformation. As hosting organization operated by the Society of Jesus (religious order of the Catholic Church), Lassalle-Institute builds bridges between spiritual and cultural traditions as well as between sciences, fields of practice and civil society.

**At this biennial conference, the common work on environmental justice will focus in particular on the question of how hope can be made possible by action oriented transdisciplinary collaboration from a view of aggravating crisis of climate change and biodiversity loss, of the need for decrease of global injustice and for a thoughtful handling of migration issues. As Raymond Williams (1921-1988) put it, however: "To be truly radical is to make hope possible rather than despair convincing".**

Nowadays, coming from approaches such as “engaged scholarship” (van de Ven 2007, Barge & Shockley-Zarabac 2008), transdisciplinarity (Mittelstrass 2003, Hirsch Hadorn et al. 2008, Rigolot 2020, Merçon 2022), and discussions focus on concepts such as transformative science (Schneidewind & Singer-Brodowski 2014), on active hope (Macy & Johnstone 2012/2022) or on the crossing of the impossible (Pelluchon 2023). This year, our conference will be dedicated to the **investigation of such concepts and its scientific as well as its practical consequences.**

### Main questions

**Our approach** is resolutely systemic, transdisciplinary, and transformative and open to the questions arising from policy fields, international organizations, internationally networked companies, democratic movements and transformation projects. The conviction is that “*science sans conscience*” (Rabelais) would reach the limits of short and mid-term impact in public controversies. Therefore, we aim at favoring the entanglement of scientific research, community wisdom, ethical, and crossing-border collaboration as well as spiritual and artistic reflection. Personal exchange in inspiring brainstorming facilities will play an important role. Last but not least, the Lassalle-Institute offers access to Zen and Christian meditations for those interested, as well as excursions to discover the beautiful landscapes of Central Switzerland.

**We invite** theoretical, empirical, methodological, and experimental contributions as well as contributions at the interface of science, professional practice, spirituality, arts, politics, economy, and society.

**Our main questions** are as follows:

- How far can “hope” be a **legitimate, intercultural, and valid concept for transdisciplinary research and cross-border collaboration** on ecological transformation and decrease of injustice? What could it mean regarding science-industry, science-practice, science-policy collaborations?
- How do diverse disciplines such as economy, ecology, ethics, political and communication sciences, public management, governance studies, arts, practical theology etc. identify, argue and explain the **evidence of optimistic perspectives**? How do they deal with the **evidence for pessimism**?
- How could “active hope” be modeled further as a “practice” (Macy & Johnstone 2012/2022, p. 4) and thus how can we “tackle the mess we’re in” (ibid.) in a holistic and **diverse field of transdisciplinary work** such as natural, social, political, economic, technical scientific research, policy planning and implementation, as well as public dialogue and community communications?

## Main topics

Proposals are welcome especially to the following main topics, organized around or rather leading to conceptualizations of hope, following the main questions listed above:

1. **Ontological, epistemological and praxeological foundations of** fragility, vulnerability and endangerment on the one hand, resilience, diversity, the practice turn and system dynamics on the other.
2. **Deontological foundations of transdisciplinarity:** spiritual, rational and praxeological (organizational, economic, political, governmental) perspectives, concepts, and approaches
3. **Methodologies of transdisciplinarity:** hermeneutics, embedded case studies, action/ transformative research, citizen science, knowledge governance
4. **Contexts of transdisciplinary:** Complex and dynamic systems of innovation, emerging out of cooperation between business, technology, science, civic society, and politics
5. **Processes of transformative transdisciplinarity:** objectives, levers, drivers, social roles, pathways, and timescales of transformation, all this on micro-, meso- and macro-levels
6. **Regulating systems of transformation:** Markets, policy fields, governmental practices, conceptualizations of the commons, human, animal and environmental rights, epistemic orders

## Formats of interaction

As formats of interaction, please choose and prepare one or two of the following categories:

- a. **Keynotes** on scaling up engaged scholarship for socio-ecological transformation
- b. **Presentations of papers** on main topics (see above)
- c. **Sessions/Panels/Roundtables** on main topics (see above)
- d. **Chaired small groups** for deepening case studies and joint action projects
- e. **Business desk:** exchange on possible joint activities/projects with business/public administrations
- f. **Placement desk** for internships, project participation, volunteers

Submissions till January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2024 – **extended deadline until February 29<sup>th</sup>**

**Submissions for contributions** in English should be uploaded together with a CV in the form of an abstract (500 words) on the conference website [www.lassalle-institut.org/en/environmental-justice.html](http://www.lassalle-institut.org/en/environmental-justice.html) by **February 29<sup>th</sup>, 2024**. They must outline the connection of the contribution to the *main questions* and at least one *main topic* of the conference. Furthermore, they should contain information on the *preferred format(s) of interaction*, on *methodological approaches*, *publications* so far and *institutional affiliations*. For session/panel/roundtable proposals a separate abstract for each paper should be included.

All abstracts will be reviewed by the academic committee and specialists from the conference partners as needed. **Notifications of acceptance will be announced by March 2024.**

Subsequently, authors of accepted submission will send their **extended abstracts for the conference program till the beginning of May 2024**. Extended abstracts will also be reviewed by members of the academic committee.

**A scientific open access publication with contributions to the conference is foreseen, as well as outreach activities after the conference.**

**Costs for accommodation, full board: CHF 600 / Participation fee: CHF 400**

For **participants presenting a paper** and **partners of the conference** the ac. costs are waved. For **participants from the Global South** stipends for travel costs as well as 50% of the participation fee are offered in limited numbers (contact: [info@lassalle-institut.org](mailto:info@lassalle-institut.org), until February 29<sup>th</sup> 2024).

**For all further information and contacts, please use the conference website:**

[www.lassalle-institut.org/en/environmental-justice.html](http://www.lassalle-institut.org/en/environmental-justice.html)