

## RIFS-Blogpost

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[Dachzeile]

# A Journey of Collective Scientific Learning

*What is Transformative Research? What kind of knowledge and capacities can research contribute to societal transformation? And how (much) should scientists reflect and adapt their own roles in complex processes of societal change and transform their practice?*

These questions took centre-stage at a workshop on "Advancing Transformative Research" hosted by the Centre for Innovation Systems & Policy Austrian Institute of Technology (AIT) in December 2022. Around 25 participants from universities and research centres across Europe and beyond accepted the invitation to the hybrid event in Vienna. Together, participants discussed definitions, theories, and the challenge of gaining social legitimacy for transformative research, as well as the shifting roles of transformative scientists.

Transformation-oriented research is already a part of various existing communities such as the [Transformations Community](#), [Sustainability Transition Research Network](#), [Action Research Plus](#), [swiss TD-Net](#) and the [Action Research Plus community](#). However, these attempts are scattered. The workshop aimed to create a space to share learnings and experiences and to link existing dynamics and schools. This is not to say that diversity in research communities is not desirable. However, it certainly is worthwhile to support each other and seek synergies.

*What characterizes transformative research? It addresses real-world sustainability challenges that require fundamental shifts or, transformation. It takes an interventionist approach that aims to shape social change through experimentation and the integration of diverse forms of knowledge, emphasizing inter- and transdisciplinary collaboration and promoting ethical considerations.*

**! Zum Aktualisieren der Textelemente, Zitation markieren und dann F9 drücken !**

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Participants of the workshop “Advancing Transformative Research”, initiated by the Austrian Institute of Technology in Vienna, December 2022. Austrian Institute of Technology [In a new report on the workshop](#), the authors of this blog post reflect on three key lessons they learned for the community from the two-day event that led to follow-up questions and elaborations:

- Transformative research critically advances from collaborative questioning: Is it really a matter of combining efforts to formulate the right questions instead of generating fast knowledge and solutions?
- Transformative research benefits from a shared identity: Who are we and what does transformative research change for us in our role and every-day scientific practice?
- Embodying participatory practices is key for transformative research: What kind of attitudes and formats do we use to come together in meaningful ways?

At the end of the event, participants sought further debate and collaboration to expand the potential of transformative research. In this regard, we would like to build on this momentum and invite the community to another discussion at RIFS about the value of a continuous learning journey for transformative research. The TranS-Mind research group at RIFS would be happy to facilitate this discussion as we explore further opportunities for collaboration, sharing, and engagement.

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