

Contemplative Scientific Collaboration

Collaboration is indispensable in nature, human culture, and scientific research. Yet in today's academic environments many researchers struggle with **overdrive competition for scarce resources** such as funding, expertise and visibility, and **lack of genuine support structures**. Chronic publication and career pressure can lead to **researchers' burnout** and **reduced quality of research** (e.g. replication crisis [1]). This undermines public trust in science and research, and yields potentially **harmful consequences** for humans and our planet. When researchers see themselves forced to abandon their once beloved profession, **science loses invaluable protagonists** on the urgent quest to solve our societal, humanitarian and ecological issues.

Scientists are calling for a **transformation of academic and research culture** [2-4]. However, demanding systems change will not suffice – **we need to start changing ourselves first**. Transformation occurs when „bottom-up“ individual and group-level change meets „top-down“ organizational and systemic change. [5-6]

In the **Contemplative Scientific Collaboration** (CSC) project we aim to co-create a novel, cooperative, **mindful academic community and culture**. Our intention is to **open new pathways** for researchers to find and express **value, purpose and meaning** in their professional vocation. Drawing inspiration from physics research communities at **CERN**, as well as from the growing body of research in the field of **Contemplative Science** [7-8], we propose a CSC being firmly grounded in five key elements that foster collaboration:

1. shared values and intentions,
2. dedicated contemplative practice,
3. rigorous scientific research,
4. collaborative „coopetition“,
5. skillful community-building.



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We seek to **establish a holistic support system** in which researchers can embody these principles as **whole human beings**, build inclusive „contemplative scientific communities“, and **join ranks to meet the challenges** that humanity faces today. We believe that the convergence of **modern science and ancient wisdom traditions** can support sciences and humanities to fulfill their **constructive role in society** and inspire **collaboration beyond confines of academia**.

We invite researchers and other interested parties to **join us** to co-create a novel CSC-based community and culture. In particular, we intend to **create spaces** [13] to support the development of shared values; **train methods to cultivate** these values and strengthen cooperation, creativity, participation, mindfulness [9-12]; help **contemplative practices** become part of the work culture; embody principles of **open science and open data** to optimize dissemination; and **build connections** with diverse stakeholders such as funding agencies and academic institutes that are working on organizational development and leadership [14].

Methods: Contemplative practices (e.g. mindfulness and compassion meditation) and **participative processes** (e.g. Systemic Konsensing, Bohm Dialogue, Council, NVC, Art of Hosting [9-13]) **can enhance skills and capabilities to engage in collaborative research environments**. This includes a gradual familiarization with a **perspective of wholeness and interdependence** that counters prevailing cultural narratives of scarcity and separation. Such a perspective shift **facilitates inter- and trans-disciplinary research**, as such collaborations can be challenging without skillful means of **engaging with one's own and others' lived experience**.

Expected results: Participants experience increased **cooperative skills**, co-creativity, resiliency, mindfulness, conflict transformation, participation, sense of **purpose and meaning**, leading to **better quality of life in the workplace**. Collaboration frees up resources, time and energy for **effective inter- and transdisciplinary research** [15]. Higher quality of results **strengthens public trust**. Innovative ideas can flourish and generate holistic solutions for today's wicked problems.

Next steps: (1) **develop a social enterprise** to carry the CSC forward; (2) **start pilot projects** with interested groups of researchers, consisting of **participative workshops** to introduce the proposed methodology, train and practice specific methods, and support integrating them into the work culture, with accompanying studies.

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