"Ecosynomics - Evidence of Post-Economic High Performance"

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Introduction

The following paper aims at practitioners; thus, the language is non-academic and non- technical. Furthermore, the content focus resides on the story, insights and implications for the work of the Ghanaian Panel on Economic Development (Panel) rather than highlighting statistical details.

When looking at Ghana's outcomes, in the past and today, we see that the underlying economic agreements[1] do not support the balanced growth of Ghana; rather they support its dependence on external resources. Rather than stimulating systemic dynamics of balanced economic development and social health, the agreements at the core of the economy seem to support continuous stagnation, further decline and social separation. This is what the behavior of Ghana's economy shows, historically. This resource dependency leads to Ghana experiencing severe challenges, ranging from deepening socio-political divides, trade deficits, and extreme poverty to an underdeveloped Industry sector.

Yes, from one perspective, the way things work in Ghana is certainly not working. This paints a dismal picture. There is also a transformational picture, one of opportunity. As one system of agreements breaks down another emerges. We propose that Ghana is resource rich, in positive economic deviants, already working with the new set of culture-specific agreements, supporting innovative growth. Based on our in-depth research, we know they must be as plentiful in Ghana as they are elsewhere around the world. To our mind, those deviants are the starting point for healthy and balanced progress in Ghana.

The following article gives an overview of the emerging science of ecosynomics that studies, scales and multiplies this phenomenon. A state level case study, describes the successful transformation process towards post economic high performance and a possible Ghanaian approach is outlined.

Thus, the intention of this article is to show pathways of action that finds and uses the hundreds if not thousands of innovative examples of post transformative, high performing and socially balanced growth engines, hidden in any level of Ghanaian society. Those examples may lead the way of the intended structural economic transformation from within instead of manifesting the destructive dependencies from external economies.

1. What is Ecosynomics?

Worldwide, tens of thousands of groups and teams, in business, government, civil society, and communities are in the process of experimenting with and reinventing their fundamental agreements. They are discovering they can generate higher levels of economic growth, business health and lead the way to more productivity and job creation for their local communities.

They also achieve higher levels of social integration and resilience as well as governmental/ administrative efficiency and effectiveness. They are demonstrating new ways of relating, which are more sustainable and lead to greater social cohesion, efficiency, effectiveness, and innovation than has long been the accepted norm. Finally, what they are doing cannot be achieved by applying the present-day economic principles of scarcity[2].

If indeed there are hundreds of thousands of social systems experimenting with agreements based on new principles then there has to be an uncountable number within Ghana. Hence, we propose it

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[1] Implicit & explicit social arrangements that people enter into willingly because they have had a hand in shaping it and it pleases them. James Ritchie-Dunham (2014) "Ecosynomics – The Science of Abundance and the Principles of Collaboration"

[2] Scarcity: A state of lack, or not having enough. Restricted in quantity.

is time for a "Ghanaian Naming". That is, finding the places that found ways to "socially grow the economy", so that it can be seen more clearly and applied more broadly.

In the past century alone, the act of "naming" has had a deep impact on how humanity sees the world, many times in the past century alone. In the 1950s the field of systems theory was named, uniting systems thinkers in thus far disconnected fields (such as physics, computer science, biology, engineering, geography, sociology, political science, psychotherapy, and economics). All of a sudden, experts deeply soloed from each other by their professional language, practice, methods, and standards were able to create a richer, more textured, shared understanding of a field they had all started to explore separately. Likewise, it appears that thousands of observers, across many fields of study, are noticing a new phenomenon emerging in hundreds of thousands of social systems across the globe. The emerging science of ecosynomics provides a model to begin to name the field these observers and practitioners are discovering.

As a framework, **ecosynomics** is a model of health that describes what people are learning about how to move from lower to higher vibrancy and economic prosperity. **Vibrancy** is what social systems experience when they are identified with and acting out of their greatest potential. It implies the concordance of diverse perspectives in a shared, meaningful whole, resulting in the emergence of a new, larger possibility.

This article is about what the Institute for Strategic Clarity[3] derived from observing thousands of those positive economic deviances[4] in 90 countries and 11 languages. The derivate framework – ecosynomics – does not only name the phenomena but supports any kind of social systems[5] in making the shift from being stuck in scarcity-driven structures proposed by contemporary economics to abundance-based structures offered by the scientific insights. Being a well-tested framework it provides both starting point and guiding frame for this article and the contribution at the Panel.

Box 1: The roots of ecosynomics

Ecosynomics (pronounced "ee-co-si-nom-iks") is the social science of abundance and the agreements that guide human interaction, said another way, the principles of collaboration. The roots of ecosynomics are eco (current usage is "relationship," historically it was "household") syn (together) nomos (rules): the rules of relationship together or the rules of collaboration. In comparison, economics is the social science of the allocation of scarce resources. The roots of economics are eco (relationship) nomos (rules): the rules of relationship.

Ecosynomics describes what humans around the globe are (unconsciously) doing to move from perceived realities of scarcity, characterized by ingratitude, "stuckness", anxiety, apathy, mistrust, and anti-social competitiveness as well as a high level of organizational failure to perceived realities of abundance, characterized by enthusiasm, flow, creative capacities, effectiveness, efficiency, trust, social solidarity and well being. Our research shows this to be a universal and basic experience every

human being knows. Thus, by giving a frame, ecosynomics highlights context specific better practices, giving culture specific pathways for economic development.

Building on those insights the international, institutional consortium together with the Institute for Strategic Clarity studied in a first pilot run dozens of systems, which experience those higher levels of vibrancy and performance.

2. The Difference between Ecosynomics & Economics

The research points at the difference between social systems driven by abundance (ecosynomic principles) and scarcity (economic principles). But how does a social system look like from the perspective of scarcity and from the paradigm of abundance?

Answering this question one has to dive into the broader context of the research first. Mainstream social and economic ideas are based on individualism, competition for scarce resources and control, while ecosynomic paradigms are based on collaboration, emerging abundant resources and commitment. In other words, it is by definition impossible to describe above average economic performance rooted in collaboration on the basis of the paradigm of scarcity and competition. It also becomes obvious that collaborative structures cannot thrive with an only-competitive framework. To our mind, this is one of the fundamental reasons for the permanent failing of projects on economic transformation, development, human health and social prosperity. This discourse fails because leadership ignores a significant "white spot," which is structurally strengthening abundance driven social systems that found innate solutions. The identification of those spaces, processes and structures present in them, enables leadership in all sectors to discuss and scale the theme of social collaboration and economic transformation.

Table 1: Comparison and contrast of the economic and the ecosynomic perspective across six core dimension

Dimension	Economic Perspective	Limitations of Economic Perspective	Ecosynomic Perspective
Focus of Analysis	A focus on the individual – The whole is the sum of its parts.	People don't behave only as individuals.	Focuses on the community and the individual simultaneously.
Primary Objective	Increasing one's own utility explains human behavior.	People don't always act rationally in their own best interest – utility does not explain human behavior in its entirety.	Maximizing states of higher performance and vibrancy, meaning and connection in our key relationships explains human behavior.
Resources	Resources are scarce. The factors of production are assumed to be land, labor and capital.	Does not address intangible capital such as intellectual capital, social capital. Assumption of scarce resources leads to scarcity of resources.	Resources are abundant. The factors of production include intangibles and are abundant when the assumption is that resources ARE abundant.
Organizations	The organizing principle of how people work together is seen as the "division of labor" and is "contract-based".	Divisions of labor and "contract" orientation do not maximize productivity.	Commitment orientation leads to enhanced performance.
Linking of	Competitive individualism – competition brings out	Optimizes individual achievement at the expense of the	Proposes that collaboration of individuals in an organizational system maximizes individual

	the best in people.	organizational system.	and systemic achievement.
Individual and the Organization			
Value Exchange	Money is the medium of value exchange and value assessment	Value exchange is not simply a scarcity-based monetary system. The individual or the organization cannot be satisfied by a partial value	The human experience is described by a rich set of values, greatly reflected in human relationship with oneself, another, those in the organization, spirit and nature

3. Major Research Findings

Based on rapid prototyping, action research and extensive readings, we developed the ecosynomic framework, which we tested with deep assessments and surveys of social systems in currently 90 countries and 11 languages.

Box 2: The research at a glance

Reseach findings at a glance

1) There is a broad phenomenon emerging that cannot be explained by contemporary economics.
2) Our research has identified 25,000 social systems experimenting with agreements based on principles of abundance, in contrast to scarcity-based principles.
3) We have worked closely with a few.
4) They are achieving far greater efficiency, effectiveness, innovation, and profitability than their peers, while simultaneously experiencing a much greater quality of life.

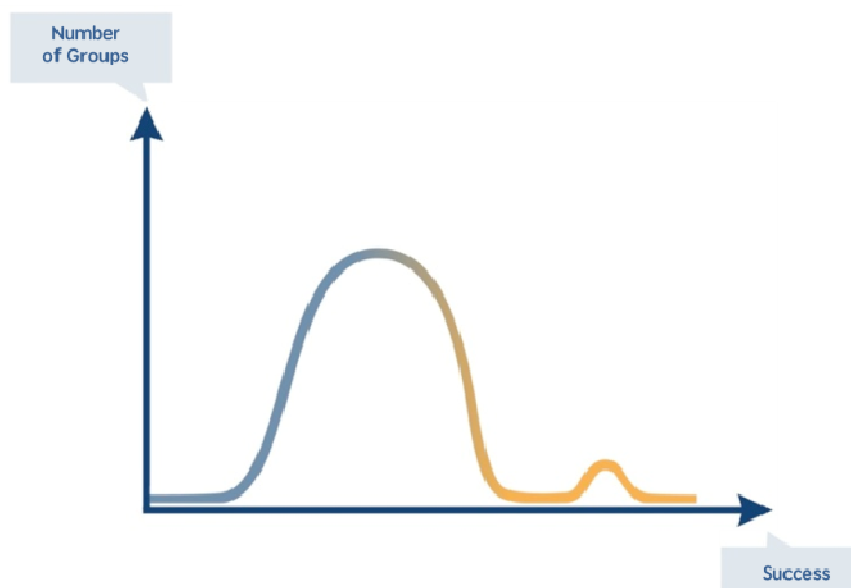
3.1 Observation of Global Phenomena

Image 1: Identification of positive economic deviance

Several years ago, Harvard-associated scientist James Ritchie-Dunham and his group of scholars and practitioners, made a game-changing observation. They scientifically observed social systems of all kinds that are always WAY more successful in comparison to their peers. At first hand they thought to have found "the lucky few," but realized that they were looking at economic phenomena that could not be explained by their very own principles of contemporary economics. Also, because it was not restricted to certain countries but was a continuously measurable fact in any country they have worked so far. Researching those social systems, they discovered that they start from a different initial assumption than economic scarcity; they start with an initial assumption of abundance. Still, or just because of that, they find that they are much more effective, efficient, sustainable and healthy than what is currently the accepted norm. Furthermore, they find they often "unintentionally" create above average positive socio-economic impact in their local communities.
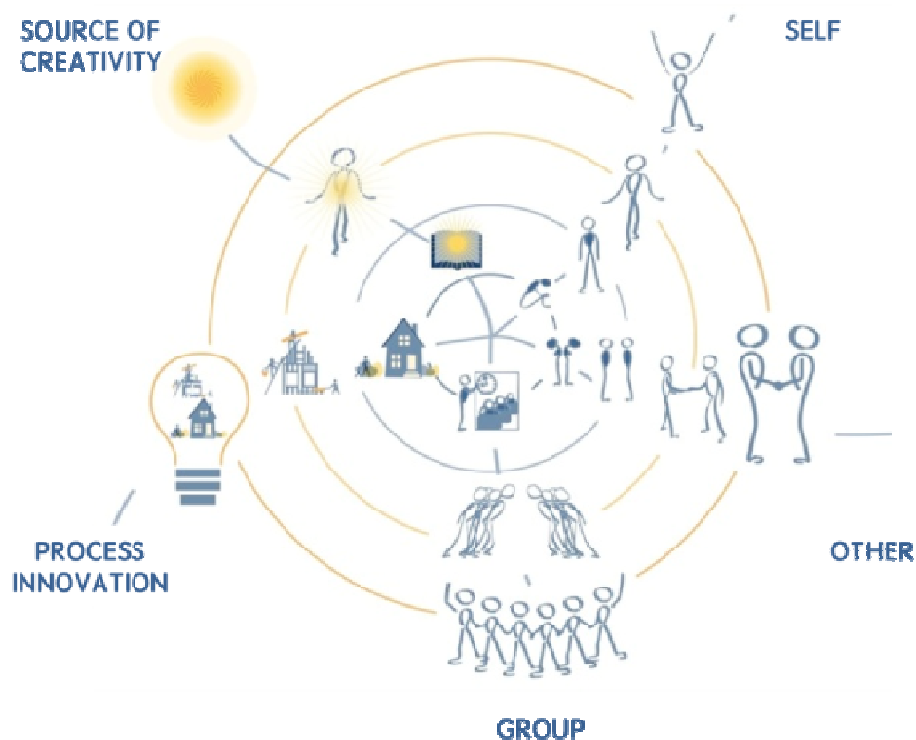
3.1.1 Visualization of the Story

Image 2: The story of 2200 case systems from 90 countries

The story they observed over and over again, at any stage of the bell-curve continuum, is one of five dimensions and three levels. First research into those stories shows that the balanced interplay of these 5 dimensions is central for abundance driven environments and above average economic success. Image 2 depicts the stories and its continuums in a circular diagram. The outer circle depicts the experience of abundance and the inner circle the experience of scarcity. Not surprisingly, they strongly correlate with what nearly all scientific and spiritual traditions of any kind and time say about the human experience of reality: Appreciating and seeing the value of each unique contribution to the whole (SELF) and experiencing healthy relationships to the other (OTHER) and the social system as a whole (GROUP). Moreover, experiencing how possibilities transform over time into powerful outcomes (PROCESS INNOVATION/ NATURE). Finally, experiencing an environment of ample creativity, flowing from everyone in the social system—a vibrant experience of the

relationship to SPIRIT. On the basis of those stories they developed a questionnaire[6] measuring the level of scarcity/abundance in a very simple and fast way.

3.1.2 Stories of Scarcity

Due to the scope of this paper only the inner/ outer circle are described. The inner circle represents stories we hear in most modern-day social systems; often characterized by some form of ingratitude, "stuckness" anxiety, apathy, mistrust, and anti-social competitiveness as well as a high level of organizational/ social failure. People often tell stories of individual collapse (SELF), not seeing each other (OTHER), being a replaceable wheel in the machine (GROUP), that has to produce things (PROCESS INNOVATION/ NATURE) that are defined by given rules/ forces one cannot question (SOURCE OF CREATIVITY/ SPIRIT).
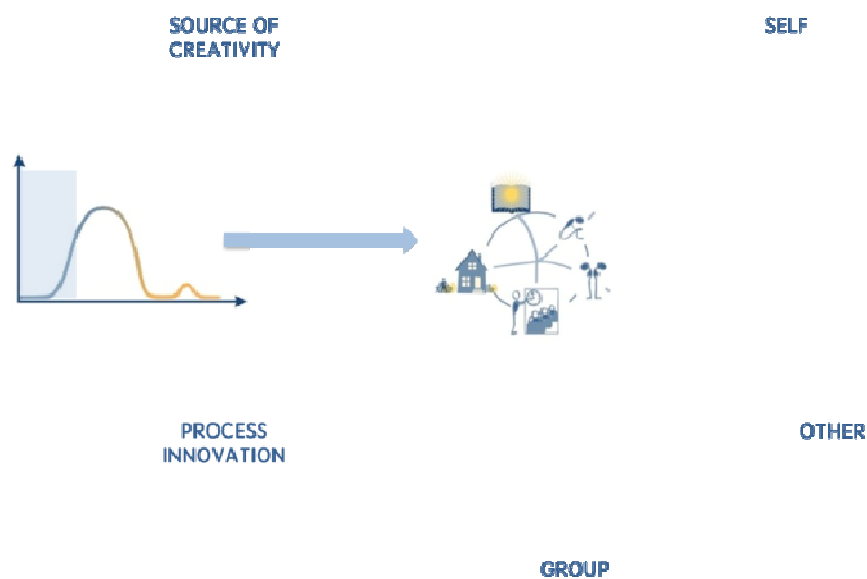
Image 3: The story of scarcity at the inner end of the circular continuum
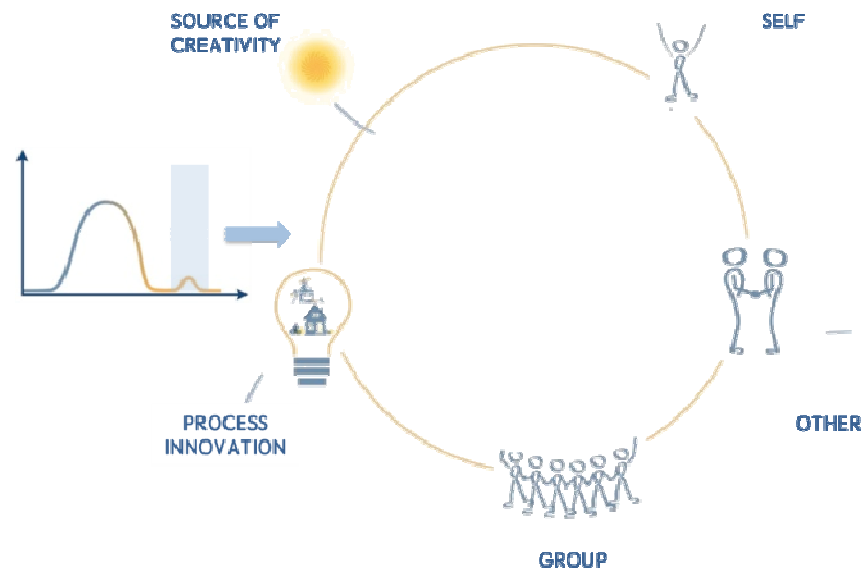
3.1.3 Stories of Abundance

Image 4: The story of abundance at the outer end of the circular continuum

Social systems with lasting and outstanding success as well as socio- economic impact characterized by flow entrepreneurship, creative capacities, effectiveness, efficiency, trust, social solidarity and well being, people tell stories of individual liberty and growth (SELF), seeing each other and being fair (OTHER), being invited to make unique contributions to something bigger that is known to them (GROUP), producing things by imagining the future AND finding creative ways to deliver (PROCESS INNOVATION/ NATURE), by getting inspiration from everywhere and everyone all of the time (SOURCE OF CREATIVITY/ SPIRIT).

3.1.4 Looking through the Four Economic Lenses[7] on Scarcity

Applying the four major economic questions, one can always observe the following in scarcity-driven social systems:
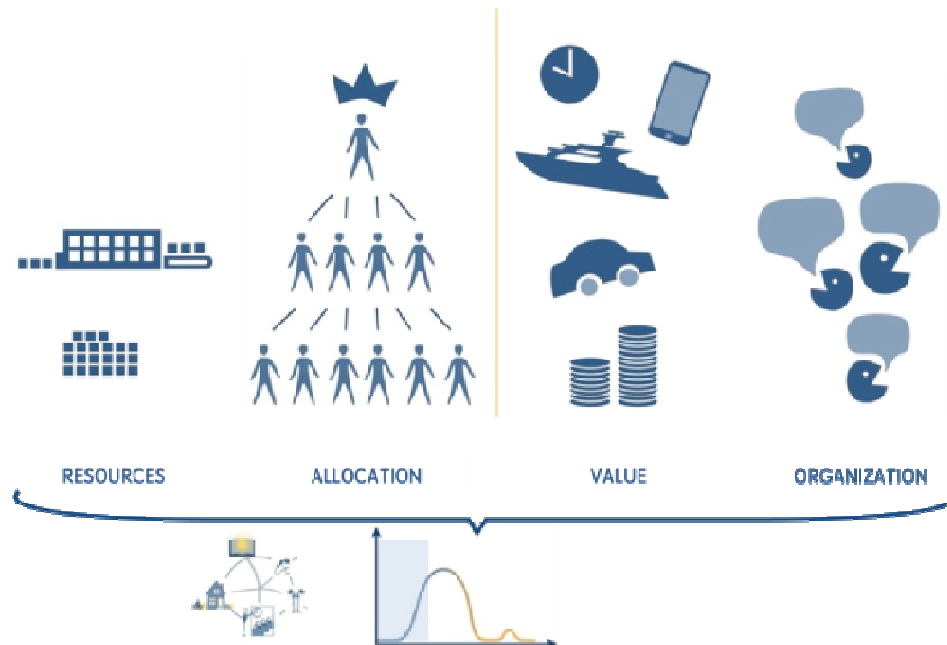

Image 5: Limited ability to perform in social systems driven by the principles of scarcity

1. <u>Resources</u> are perceived as limited and are only those one can see or touch.
2. One of the 5 dimensions dominates the <u>allocation</u> of these resources. Depending on the culture and sector it often differs.
3. The only <u>value</u> is put on outcomes and things, and the system exists to maximize the things it has.
4. Competition is the only <u>organizing</u> principle towards the outside world and inside the group.

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[7]The four core questions of economics are: how much of the necessary factors of production are available (resources); who will decide how to use them (resource allocation mechanism); what criteria shall be used for allocation decisions (value); and how shall be interacted with each other to get what the system needs (organization)?

3.1.5 Looking through the four economic lenses on abundance

Applying the four major economic questions, one observes the following in abundance-driven social systems:

1. The resources one needs can be imagined and further developed. Game-changing options emerge.
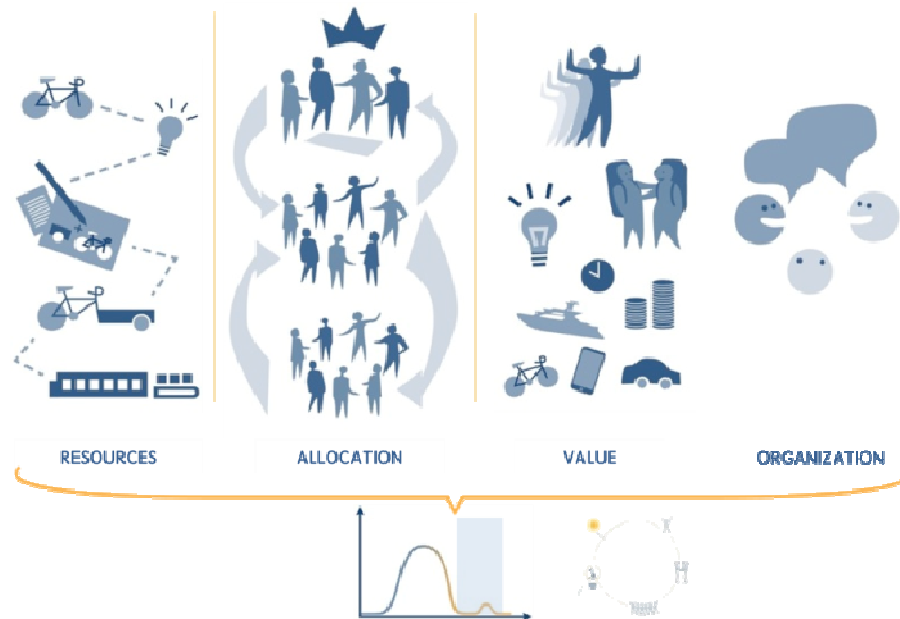
Image 6: Advanced ability to perform in social systems driven by the principles of abundance

2. All 5 dimensions define the allocation of the available resources independent of culture or sector.
3. Value is put on outcomes/ things AND development AND possibilities.
4. Organizing around principles of collaboration is the better way to be highly competitive (inside & outside).

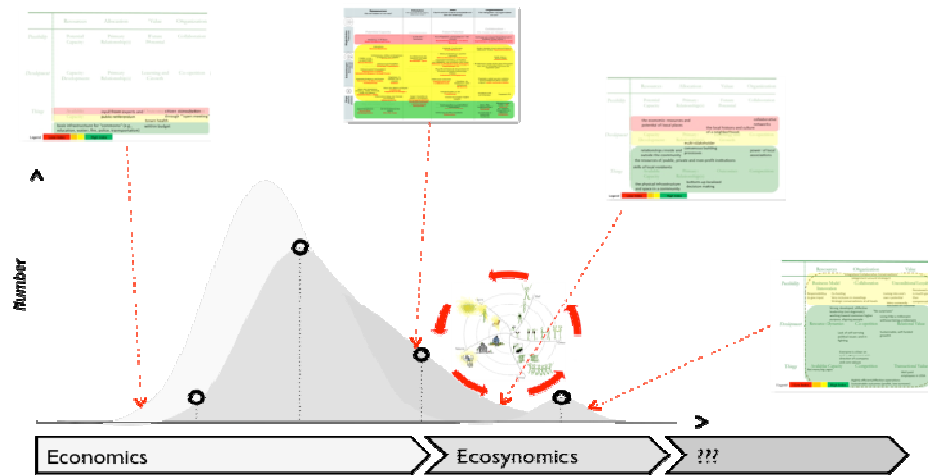## 3.2 Measuring the Costs of Scarcity and the Benefits of Abundance

Image 7: Measuring the costs of scarcity throughout the whole continuum. Allowing taking effective and efficient decisions, supporting economic transformation, human well-being and social cohesion.

Abundance provides ample direct (economic/ political/ cultural/ social/ environmental) benefits to any social system. This abundance already exists in the potential and development of the systems strategic resources, in the unexploited possibilities of its structures and processes, and in its stakeholders' perceived value of the relationship with it. The data of the Institute for Strategic Clarity (ISC) proves abundance to be a desired state for any social system. While this seems obvious, direct measurement of this abundance is not. Without measurement, a system cannot assess the benefit-cost of investing in abundance-based practices. Measuring the benefits of and capacity for abundance gets its inspiration from the quality movement. Initially nobody knew how to assess the benefits of quality programs; this made investment decisions difficult. The innovation was to assess the cost of "no-quality." The insight was that the benefit of quality had to be at least as big as the cost of no quality[8]. Likewise, the benefits of abundance must be at least as big as the costs of scarcity, which is straightforward to measure.

What if you could increase the quantity and quality of resources in your social system, their efficiency, effectiveness, and innovativeness by 100% at no cost? The fact is that most systems are missing at least 75% of the benefits of the capacities they have already funded, as a result of, costs of waste, poor quality, excessive inventory, turnover of high-performance employees, migration, low resilience, social conflict, stress, and the failure to meet customer and voters needs (to name a few). These same social system may also be missing up to 90% of the benefits of the potential within their reach, such as seeing new opportunities, attracting top performers and investors, raising resilience, empowering growth and well-being, increasing the percentage of the highest margin products and services in their niche, the potential contributions every employee or citizen brings every day and stakeholder loyalty towards governing structures etc.

4. Detailed Case Study of a Social System growing into and Sustainably Living with Ecosynomic Principles

The focus of this paper resides on Ghana as a country; thus, the highlighted case study describes the best-researched process of structural-systemic transformation towards economic sovereignty and

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[8]Classic texts that brought the cost of no-quality include (Philip B. Crosby, (1979) Quality is free: the art of making quality certain / New York: McGraw-Hill; Armand V. Feigenbaum (1956) Total Quality Control, Harvard Business Review 34 (6). For a recent review of the "cost of quality" literature and practice, see (Schiffauerova, A. and Thomson, V. (2006) "A review of research on cost of quality models and best practices", International Journal of Quality and Reliability Management, Vol. 23, No. 6, p. 647-669)

higher states of vibrancy at the state level. Also, the content is about energy sovereignty, the process is transferrable to any topic since it includes a diverse set of (strongly conflicting) stakeholders (e.g. economic transformation and poverty). Being adopted for the purpose of this article, it is taken out of the recently published book from Prof. Dr. James Ritchie-Dunham (2014) "Ecosynomics – The Science of Abundance and the Principles of Collaboration" (www.ecosynomics.com).

For a well-described case of a small company working with ecosynomic principles please watch this video: www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jx8T2T1Hr90. For various other case studies visit ecosynomics.com.
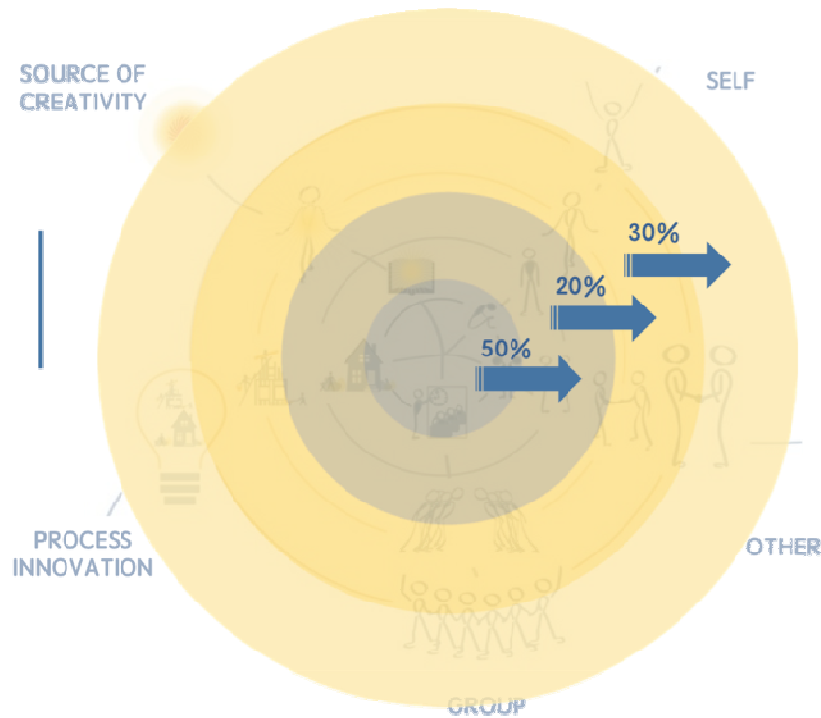

Image 8: The case describes a state level move from the inner circles of vibrancy to the outer circles of vibrancy. Throughout our 70 cases we shifted the level of vibrancy of the social system at hand on average by 1/2 a level (50% from the inner circle of perceived scarcity to the middle circles, 20% within the inner circles and 30% from the middle circles to the outer circles of perceived abundance. Thus, allowing for higher levels of innovation, efficiency, innovation and well-being as before.

The case being shared in this chapter describes a societal-level change effort, an initiative to bring about a radical shift of energy policy and behavior at the state level, in Vermont, USA. Change at this scale and complexity is something relatively few people are likely to have contemplated, much less experienced firsthand. Yet there are many such initiatives taking place around the world today in communities of all different sizes.[9]

These may be called dialogue processes, growth and transformation initiatives, public deliberation or many other things. However, they all involve bringing together representatives of all the people who have a significant interest in an important issue—"the stakeholders"—to share their different perspectives and figure out a way to address that issue together. From an ecosynomics perspective, however, every problem-solving effort is at heart an effort to move out of the inner circle of scarcity, into the capacity to solve problems collaboratively as part of a larger set of characteristics of social systems operating in the outer circle of vibrancy.

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[9]For information on the many stakeholder processes around the world, see Pruitt and Thomas (2007); the website of the National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation, www.ncdd.org; and the United Nations Development Program website, www.democraticdialoguenetwork.org.

This is not to say that participants in the Vermont energy initiative or other stakeholder processes thought of what they were doing in ecosynomics terms, nor that they rigorously followed the processes the ISC developed. They did not. Nevertheless, leaders looking at such processes from an Ecosynomic perspective state that they obtain not only a powerful policy structure but also an efficient and effective organizing frame.

4.1 Seeing a Different Possibility

In 2009, Anne and Arthur Berndt, co- trustees of the Maverick Lloyd Foundation, and Jennifer Berman, the foundation's executive director, asked themselves a question: *"can we develop much more systemic responses to our most challenging issues in Vermont?"* This was the origin of the Vermont energy initiative.

Holding this question, they searched nationally for groups that had done the kind of large-scale change effort they envisioned for Vermont. The search led to RE-AMP, an initiative that started in 2005 with a multi-stakeholder process, designed and led by Scott Spann, our colleague in work with CARE Guatemala where we successfully redefined poverty at national level through applying a similar process. RE- AMP had produced a regional network involving more than 100 non-profit organizations and foundations across eight states in the upper Midwest. This network was pursuing a variety of projects in the areas of clean energy, coal, energy efficiency, global warming solutions, and transportation, with the ambitious goal of reducing regional global warming pollution by 80 percent by 2050. In short, RE-AMP was the kind of process the Maverick Lloyd Foundation wanted to see in Vermont.

Through this connection, in the fall of 2009, the foundation found the ISC and our associates at Growing Edge Partners[10]. Our task was to support the Maverick Lloyd Foundation in bringing the diverse, competitive, and sometimes fractious groups of stakeholder in Vermont's energy system on board with the vision of stepping up to a new level of collaboration in order to achieve much more dramatic results[11]. One of our chief lessons from the Guatemala initiative, reinforced by our ongoing experience at THORLO (a well researched and extremely successful company working with ecosynomic principles[12]), was the necessity of having a strong core group to host others in making this kind of shift within a large stakeholder system.

4.2 Hosting the Process

As we began working, we quickly discovered that the task of forming a leadership group that could sustain an effort to define and realize a long-term, state-wide aspiration required tackling head-on the widely-held assumption within the state that certain individuals and groups of Vermonters would simply never be able to collaborate. We needed to start somewhere, however, and the convening power of the Maverick Lloyd Foundation within the small circle of large philanthropic organizations in

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[10] For more on the systems process that led to RE-AMP, see
(http://innatestrategies.com/docs/REAMPFinal.pdf). For the current status of RE-AMP, see
(http://www.reamp.org/). For more on the Growing Edge Partners process, see
(http://growingedgepartners.com/).
[11] Vermont's strong tradition of independence and mutuality is well documented in many statewide processes and surveys. For example, see the reports "Imagining Vermont: Values and Vision for the Future" at the Council on the Future of Vermont (http://futureofvermont.org/). Vermont's state motto is "Freedom and Unity" (see http://www.leg.state.vt.us/statutes/fullsection.cfm?Title=01&C hapter=011&Section=004 91).
[12] A detailed descriptions of their post transformational practices and agreements can be found in chapter 11 of the book ecosynomics – The Science of Abundance (www.ecosynomics.com)

the state made it possible to do so. Initially, the foundation assembled a handful of people from other leading foundations to consider what the goal of a possible project could be. This was a group that, if it decided on a change initiative, would be able to raise the funding necessary to underwrite it and, possibly, to convene a larger leadership group to carry it forward.

Over the next couple of years, three key elements would enable this small planning group to succeed in bringing in more leaders and stakeholders, and in moving the project to definitive action steps. The first was the audacity of the goal they defined–making Vermont's energy sources 100-percent renewable by 2030. The second key success factor was the ability to convene and form a diverse set of people into the leadership and stakeholder groups. Confounding all the assumptions about the impossibility of getting key actors to work together, they were able to include all of the voices that needed to be part of the conversation. The high level of vibrancy in the quality of leadership that the convening group provided was the third success factor. As the process unfolded, we witnessed a growing energy and capacity for collaboration, based on a growing alignment among people who started out highly skeptical that they would ever be willing to work together.

4.3 Defining the Goal

The small planning group reviewed the challenges facing the state. Focusing on the economic wellbeing of Vermonters, they considered which issues were sufficiently large-scale and required a systemic approach for significant change to occur. Besides other possible issues like economic development, governance structures or poverty, they decided on energy production and use, focusing on renewable energy.

To get specific about the goal, we used an exercise of looking at the degree of change required and the time horizon for that change. This exercise helped the planning group understand the gap between where they thought the state was headed and where they thought it needed to be. It was in this conversation that the group realized that, despite all of their hard work, a huge outlay of resources, and incremental progress in each of their areas on the advancement of renewable energy, they were not achieving their desired goals. They saw clearly that seriously addressing renewable energy issues in the state would require a fundamental shift across all the efforts in the state. Their current, independent activities would not change Vermont's energy supply and demand sectors fast enough.

The change-over-time exercise helped clarify this realization, by helping the social system specify the degree of change needed and the degree of urgency. The group realized that it wanted to see a complete shift, which had to happen within the next generation in order to realize their goal. This led to the goal of making Vermont's energy portfolio 100-percent renewable by 2030. Some members of the planning group felt this goal was too audacious, but other members said, *"We need to suspend disbelief, choose the boldest goal we can, and explore what it will take to get there."* While there was much conversation about the political liability of such an aggressive goal, the group came to the agreement that it made a bold statement and pointed the initiative in a very specific direction. In this way the goal could serve as a rallying point for change, around which the group could invite others into the process.

4.4. Inviting in Diversity

Next, the planning group set about building a leadership team that could convene a larger stakeholder process and carry an initiative forward over the period of years that would likely be required for success. The group selected carefully. All of the key energy sectors needed to be part of the mix. This included government agencies dealing with environmental and energy issues; elected government officials at the local, state and federal levels; non- profit organizations working on energy issues in the state; the electric utility industry; group involved in developing renewable

energy; the state's large employers; and the state university. Somehow the group also had to reflect the full political spectrum. The individuals representing the different sectors had to be prominent enough within their sectors to be able to influence opinion, and if necessary, bring others into the process. Finally, all the participants needed to be able to agree to be part of a multi-year process.

We formed a list of a dozen candidates whom the planning group members agreed to contact, often in pairs. For the most part, they chose to contact those people with whom they already had some connections or personal experience. At the next planning group meeting, they reported the findings from their interviews with the candidates, and we had the ten members we wanted for the leadership team. All ten members knew each other well, since they were all active leaders at the state level. They welcomed the chance to pool their efforts towards the shared audacious goal of "100 percent by 2030."

Many people had told us that it would be difficult or impossible to get the amount of time we wanted on these busy people's calendars. Yet once they saw who else was to be on the team, they made the time, often telling us something to the effect of, *"I wouldn't miss working with a team of this caliber for anything."* We also found out as the process moved forward that, for many of the ten individuals who eventually joined the leadership team, the goal of 100 percent renewable energy was a positive motivator, an indication that the conveners of this process were serious about achieving great things for Vermont.

4.5 Developing Hosting Capacity

With the official launch of Energy Action Now in 2010, the planning group passed the project on to the leadership team that would be responsible for carrying it through. The leadership team met a few times to build relationships among themselves, build their vision for the project, agree to the project design, and scope out whom to invite into the larger stakeholder conversations. Over the course of these meetings and the ensuing steps of inviting in the other stakeholders, the team came to see itself not so much as leaders but as hosts.

The team members realized that, unlike previous Vermont initiatives, they would not be individually leading a like-minded group towards fairly narrow and quite specific objectives. This time they were acting as a team to convene a diverse group of people, representing many conflicting perspectives, in order to pursue an extremely audacious goal relevant to all. Through this realization, they came to see that they could not tell people what to do or even what they should try to achieve. Rather, they needed to invite people into a very broad exploration of possible pathways towards a shared future they would envision together.

The diversity of participants, each with a specific local perspective, strongly suggested the analogy of hosting a party, a party of very different people invited to figure out together what their future looked and how to get there. When this connection was made, the leadership team realized it was hosting the broader stakeholder group more than leading it.

As the leadership team prepared to assemble a still larger stakeholder group, it did its own review of the goal. What did all the terminology mean? Was it doable? Were they willing to put their names on something like this? They agreed to stick with the 100-percent goal, but to make it tentative, pending conversations with a wider range of stakeholders.

4.6 Convening the Stakeholder Social System

The team was determined to be rigorous in its effort to ensure that all the key elements of Vermont's energy system were represented in the conversations on how to achieve the goal. This is a crucial step for any stakeholder process, and there are a variety of approaches to the task of "stakeholder mapping," which involves determining all the relevant actors in a situation, and as much as possible,

the relationships among them. We supported the leadership team in taking a system- dynamics approach to this task. Through extensive discussions and a broad-ranging literature review, we helped them create a schematic map of Vermont's energy system (see Image: 9). Through many iterations of working with this map, they identified what perspectives had to be part of the mix and which individuals in the state could best bring those perspectives into the project.
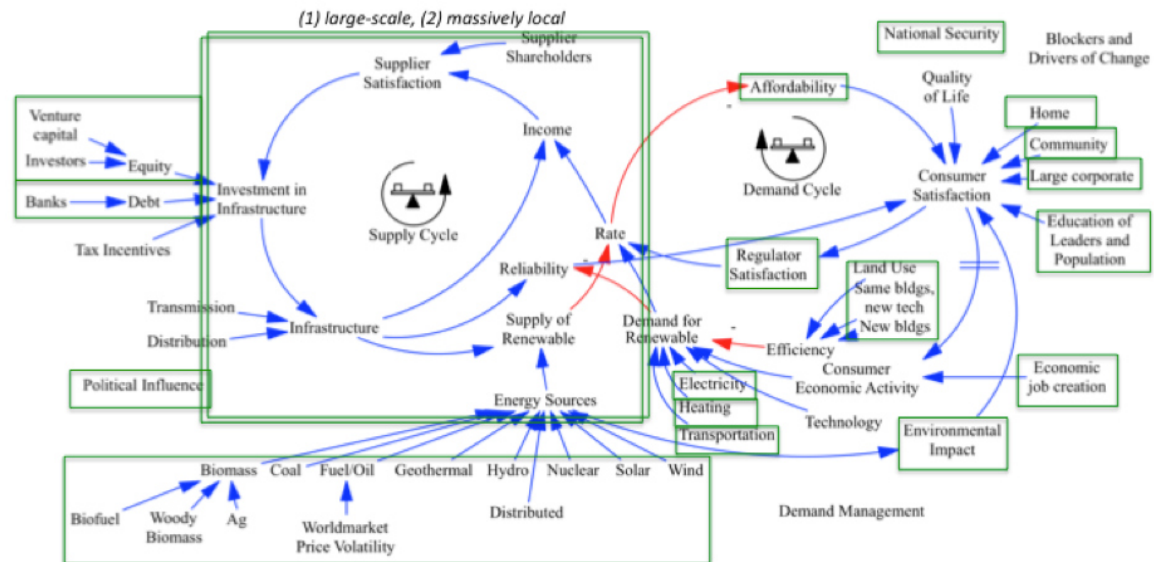

Image 9: System process for selecting perspectives to include

Next, the team decided that each of its members would take personal responsibility for recruiting specific individuals into the stakeholder group. In the end, they surprised everyone, even themselves, with the diversity and comprehensiveness of the perspectives they were able to bring into the process—from conservative to progressive, small town to city, small to large business, civil society, government, bank and investment financing, local to national politics, electricity, heating, transportation, energy efficiency, and for and against renewable energy solutions. Many people whom we were told would not participate, because of old conflicts, rivalries or strong cultural differences, did in fact participate. In the later stages of the project, when new participants came in, more than one of them expressed amazement at joining people they never expected to see in a room together, much less collaborating on a change initiative. How did this happen?

What was clear to us as we observed this process was the importance of the hosting provided by the leadership team. The leadership team dedicated much effort and time to being clear, transparent, and open minded in working with the different stakeholders. They succeeded in creating a trusting environment in which very diverse and seemingly conflicting perspectives could be shared and integrated. This included inviting stakeholders who were long-term adversaries into the process and telling them how important it was to get their perspective into the group's understanding. This emphasis on the value of diversity helped shift the focus from warring perspectives to the richness and validity of different perspectives.

Many of the participants in the stakeholder group told us that it was the sincerity of the invitation that had brought them to the process, and the quality of leadership throughout a series of gatherings that kept them engaged and committed. It was also significant that the leadership team was open to redefinition of the goal by the larger stakeholder group. In this way, they established the principle of honoring all perspectives and set the stage for the emergence of strong alignment. When the full stakeholder group did its own analysis, it adjusted the goal from 100- percent to 80-percent renewable energy by 2030. This was still audacious enough to make it clear the project would stretch the state's capacity to work collaboratively to address large, systemic issues and something everyone could fully embrace.

This is what leadership looks like in abundance driven social systems (outer circles). When sincerely hosted, people experience more of their own selves coming out, they experience more respect and support from and towards others, they experience a clearer contribution to the group, they experience the creativity in everyone, and they experience the successful grounding of inspiring possibilities.

The next phase of Energy Action Now would take the stakeholders through a collaborative inquiry into the details of the energy future they desired for Vermont, build on this early achievement, and move the social system through all the steps of the O Process[13] (Image 10).

4.6.1 Seeing Possibility Together

The shock people expressed at the diversity of the stakeholder group that assembled in September 2010 highlighted the challenge of getting the stakeholders to work together. The existing assumptions and agreements that sustained Vermont's small-scale, competitive-cooperative approach to addressing important issues facing the state would have to change. For this to happen, the process participants would have to start perceiving each other and talking to each other in new ways.

4.6.2 Seeing the System & Each Other

We supported this shift with a step that is common in stakeholder processes. Before the first stakeholder meeting, we conducted individual interviews with each of the twenty-four people who would be participating. The purpose of this exercise was to be able, when the group comes together for the first time, to reflect back to them a view of the whole that honored each person's perspective and uncovered areas of agreement that typically remained hidden behind the obvious disagreements. The mapping exercise also set the group up for embarking on the O Process, starting with a picture of the state of current reality.

In this case, we again took a system-dynamics approach. Our interviews focused on how the stakeholders perceived Vermonters' fundamental values, and the impact of energy on Vermonters as individuals, towns, and businesses. Based on these interviews, we created a systems map of each stakeholder's perspective on Vermont's energy system; then we validated all of the maps with follow- up interviews with each stakeholder. Next we created a single map that integrated all of the perspectives, organized around five strategic considerations - goals, resources, actions, structure and people. The four Ecosynomic lenses were thus incorporated into this system map[14].

The integrated map of Vermont's energy system was big, complex, and at first glance, quite impenetrable. Yet in the hands of the leadership team, it became a means of hosting the stakeholders through the O Process. To prepare for the first plenary session of the stakeholder

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[13]You can read more about O Process first applied in a CARE project in Guatemala in great detail (Ritchie-Dunham, J. L. (2008). The End of Poverty – The Beginning of Self- determination: An Integral Systemic Exploration of Self- determination in Guatemala. Wilton, NH: Institute for Strategic Clarity), in the context of business strategy approaches to poverty alleviation (Ritchie-Dunham, J. L. (2008). A Collaborative-Systemic Strategy Addressing the Dynamics of Poverty in Guatemala: Converting Seeming Impossibilities into Strategic Probabilities. In C. Wankel (Ed.), Alleviating Poverty through Business Strategy (pp. 73-98). New York: Palgrave Macmillan), or as a learning history (Waddell, S. (2005). A Learning History: The CARE-LAC – Institute for Strategic Clarity Guatemala Poverty Project (pp. 32). Wilton, NH: Institute for Strategic Clarity).

[14]This is the GRASP framework, which has been applied in many strategic settings. For a detailed description of how to create a GRASP map, see (Ritchie-Dunham, J. L., &Rabbino, H. T. (2001). Managing from Clarity: Identifying, Aligning and Leveraging Strategic Resources. Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.), and for many examples of its application, see (Ritchie-Dunham, J. L., & Puente, L. M. (2008). Strategic Clarity: Actions for Identifying and Correcting Gaps in Mental Models. Long Range Planning, 41(5), 509-529).

group, the team examined this map of perspectives in depth. Then each member of the leadership team took responsibility for presenting one or more of the individual maps to the large group. The team made these assignments with the intention of creating some surprises for the stakeholder group. They made sure that each map's presenter was someone whom most in the social system would see as unlikely to understand that stakeholder's perspective. As a map was presented, the "owner" of that perspective was invited to criticize or expand upon the system captured in the map and the presentation of his or her perspective. This exercise was another way in which the leadership team set a clear example of open-minded inquiry and invited others to follow suit.

This format allowed everyone to hear what each stakeholder actually had to say about energy issues, rather than what they *thought* each other would say. We heard many times in this process, "I did not know that you and I cared about achieving the same goal, and I did not know what you were doing to contribute to that goal." It was through this mutual inquiry that people first began to see that they held similar values and a common aspiration for their state. They also recognized that each had a unique contribution to make toward achieving that aspiration. Once they agreed on the goal of 80 percent renewable energy by 2030, this understanding was critical for seeing the whole system and what could be done to shift it—in effect, for seeing what different agreements might be possible.

4.6.3 Moving to the Top of the O

In processes such as this, there is often a discernable breakthrough moment, when the group makes a perceptible shift to a shared sense that something different is possible. For the Energy Action Now stakeholders this shift occurred midway through the second 3-day meeting. The stakeholders had broken into small group by energy sector (i.e., electricity, heating, transportation, efficiency) to consider the feasibility of the 80-percent-by-2030 goal. As the group reported their conclusions in a plenary session, one after another stated they could easily see how to reach the goal in their own sector, but could not see how other sectors could do so. The surprise and excitement in the room were palpable. Suddenly the stakeholders saw possibilities together that they had not seen before from their individual perspectives. They had moved to the top of the O in the O Process (see Image 10).
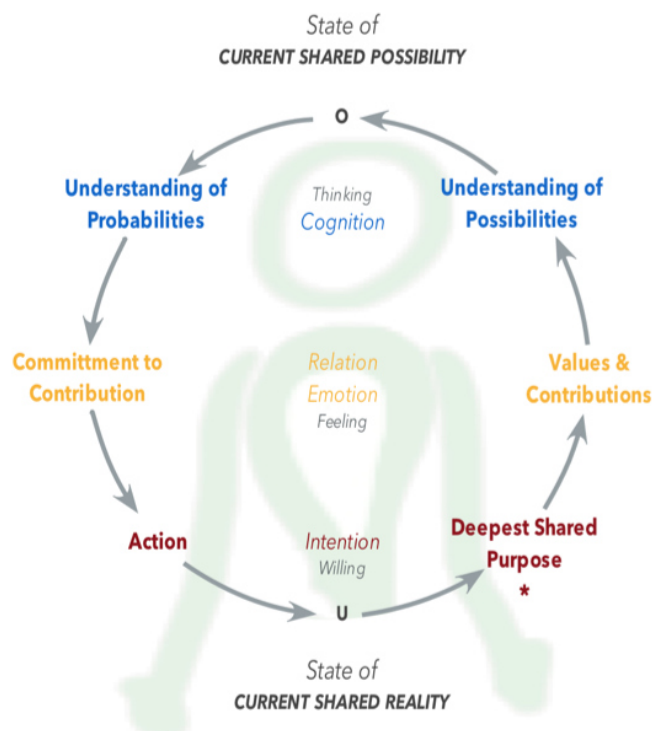
From the first step of each stakeholder sharing his or her individual current reality, they had opened up to seeing all the separate realities and recognized a great deal of shared purpose underlying their separate perspectives and activities. With the guidance of the leadership team, they had become much more familiar with what other stakeholders brought to the system. This greater mutual awareness had opened their view to the possibilities in their own parts of the system and prepared the ground for the "ah-ha" moment of recognizing the much greater possibility existing in the system as a whole.

In ecosynomics terms, the social system had moved into a state of high vibrancy (outer circles). From this position they could clearly see the limitations of the mid-level vibrancy agreements that had governed their prior efforts. They realized that they could come together with agreements at a higher level of performance to achieve the more audacious energy goal they had defined, taking into account the state's renewable energy resources, how they could organize collaboratively, and the value Vermonters would experience from their success.

In the next step, the full group of hosts and stakeholders worked with the integrated form of the individual systems maps. They explored how the individual perspectives were interconnected, and how they influenced each other and the overall behavior of the system. It became clearer how they would each need to shift, in agreement with the others, to achieve the shift they envisioned for the whole system.

4.6.4 From Possibility to Action

As depicted in Image 10, the move from possibilities to probabilities occurred in two steps. First, the stakeholder group worked through multiple iterations of analyzing and validating the integrated map of the energy system. Through this process, it identified a set of core system dynamics. Everyone agreed that these dynamics had to shift in order to move Vermont's energy system from its current, highly reliable and cost effective but "low renewable" portfolio of energy sources to a future, highly reliable, cost effective and "high renewable" portfolio.

In ecosynomics terms, having settled on a shared aspiration at the level of possibility, the stakeholders had begun to see what was needed in order to produce high impact outcomes.

The group continued to work collaboratively with the integrated system map to identify the appropriate measures of overall health in Vermont's energy system. Next they agreed on which forces in the system most contributed to its health, and the points at which they could activate those forces to move the system in a positive direction. Based on this collective analysis, the stakeholder group converged on four leverage points for shifting the whole system. These were capital mobilization, technological innovation, regulatory and permitting policies, and public engagement.

Once it had clearly defined each of the four leverage-point areas, the stakeholder group took the second step, which was to launch four new stakeholder processes to develop initiatives in each area. It identified experts and key stakeholders in each area and created four teams to invite and convene the new stakeholder groups. Each team included hosting leaders, stakeholders, and experts in each leverage point area. When the expanded leverage-point teams came together in the spring of 2011, the hosting leaders shared the story of the project; how the original stakeholder group had moved through the first half of the O Process and the possibilities they had seen together. The hosting leaders then invited all the new participants into the exploration of how to convert these possibilities into probabilities and then move to action—the second half of the O Process.

In separate meetings conducted near Burlington, Vermont, the four leverage- point teams identified specific projects that could leverage Vermont's strengths and resources to achieve its audacious goal.

This shifted the idea of a possibility, such as mobilizing capital or mobilizing public opinion, into a reality these experts and stakeholders could see as probable. Everyone worked to ensure that the recommendations from the teams were in alignment. Finally, the four leverage-point teams came together to share their recommendations and work out a unified action plan for the whole project.

4.6.5 Shifts in Assumptions and Agreements

Behind this seemingly straightforward process, there occurred many shifts in perspective and agreements; between individuals, between organizations, and across the state. The participants in the process saw, often for the first time, that they shared deep Vermont values. For example, two of the stakeholders who often went head-to-head in the state house saw that they shared the same "ends," they just disagreed on the "means." These ends were so important, and the means not so different, that they could agree to disagree—a shift for both of them. Taking on the audacious goal of 80-percent renewable energy, across all four sectors, by 2030, was a galvanizing shift towards an aspiration they all had held, yet none had believed it would be possible. What was galvanized was a shift in agreements from working independently to working collaboratively toward that goal.

Many of the participants described the experience of that shift as moving from feeling responsible only for what they could directly impact, to feeling responsible collaboratively for all of the impacts across the state. As one participant described his shift, *"I'm no longer just responsible for my results within the heating sector, rather for everything that influences our ultimate outcomes of sustainable sovereignty in deciding our energy future."* Others talked about realizing that all four energy sources— electricity, heating, transportation, and efficiency—would be critical in achieving the goal, not just the one their own work addressed directly.

All participants agreed that accomplishing such an audacious goal would require systemic coordination across all four energy sectors and all four leverage points. The capacity for this kind of coordination did not exist in Vermont. Indeed, it could not exist under the old agreements by which change happened only through thousands of independent efforts. The stakeholders' committing to develop that capacity was a major shift. Towards the end of the process, it seemed that a new Vermont value became palpable in the group, expressed as *"together we can and we must."* While everyone held a deep appreciation of how this initiative built on all that had been accomplished before - innovative legislation and regulation, creative business innovation, an engaged civil society sector of non-profit organizations, and a committed citizenry—they also felt ready to move away from the previous mindset of *"I will do what I can on my own."*

4.7 Conclusion

Energy Action Now concluded its work in June 2011, just as the governor of Vermont began the process of a new multi-year energy plan for Vermont, to replace the previous plan from 1998. Many of the stakeholders who had participated in our process were invited to help with this design. As they tell the story, they showed up to the governor's process with the recommendations from the four leverage-point teams, and were able to influence the state's new energy plan in a significant way. The Vermont Comprehensive Energy Plan was vetted in many public hearings and accepted in the late fall of 2011, after which the state created a system-wide coordinating body to support initiatives in the four leverage-point areas[15].

From an ecosynomics perspective, this stakeholder initiative sought to move Vermont from a medium level of vibrancy to a higher level, at which Vermonters could claim economic sovereignty over their own reliable, economic, low-environmental-impact energy future. Most people involved in the two-year project were clear that a move to a higher level of vibrancy was a move to a new game, and that this required playing the game by new rules, or new agreements.

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[15]To see Vermont's Comprehensive Energy Plan 2011, visit (http://www.vtenergyplan.vermont.gov/).

Identifying the corresponding gap took place at several key stages: at the outset, within the Maverick Lloyd Foundation; within the first convening group; and again, within the whole stakeholder group. In each instance, this activity provided clarity and inspiration in regard to the purpose of the initiative. Exploring the experience of others was also an important aspect of the process. This includes the initial search for models of large-scale collaborative processes, and the inclusion in the leverage-point teams of experts who could contribute knowledge of what was going on outside Vermont. All of the stakeholders' work with the system map was a deep dive into the third step of assessing their own experience, and this paved the way for the fourth step of defining and enacting a move, which was the convening and work of the leverage-point teams.

Most important perhaps, as the leadership team hosted the stakeholders through the O Process, they had a direct experience of the outer circle of vibrancy. As they moved around the O, the participants each saw their own unique contributions—past, current, and future—to a higher purpose. This gave them a positive experience of the relationship to self. By respectfully sharing each other's individual system map, they experienced supporting and being supported by other individuals, quite a different experience of the relationship to other from what they had been used to. Through their work with the integrated map, the stakeholders could each see how their individual perspectives came together and influenced each other within the larger system. From this integrated perspective, they could appreciate the value of each unique contribution to the whole, an experience of the relationship to the social system that was far more powerful and positive than what they had experienced before. Moving along they could see how different possibilities developed over time to create innovative and powerful outcomes. Finally, throughout this process, the hosting of the leadership team created an environment of abundant creativity, flowing from everyone in the social system—a vibrant experience of the relationship to spirit.

Seeing the process work effectively at this scale confirmed for us the broad applicability of the principles of ecosynomics. The processes that engage diverse stakeholders to work collaboratively on common issues represent an important phenomenon. They seem to show there is a pathway for moving society to higher levels of economic prosperity. We believe societal change processes can be better understood—and perhaps become more successful—when placed in the ecosynomics framework of agreements. We see the fact that there are so many stakeholder processes going on in such a wide range of situations as a sign, that people are already finding pathways to abundance and vibrancy.

5. Inspiring the Structural Transformation of Ghana's Economy

In presenting ecosynomics, we recognize that there are straightforward ways to choose agreements that enable above average economic outcomes and social wellbeing at the same time. As right now, we are often asked what we see emerging in the future as more and more people take on these agreements. In the remaining pages, we will share a small part of what we know is possible as people apply ecosynomics more broadly, and what needs to shift to facilitate this. The content will be developed further during the Panel.
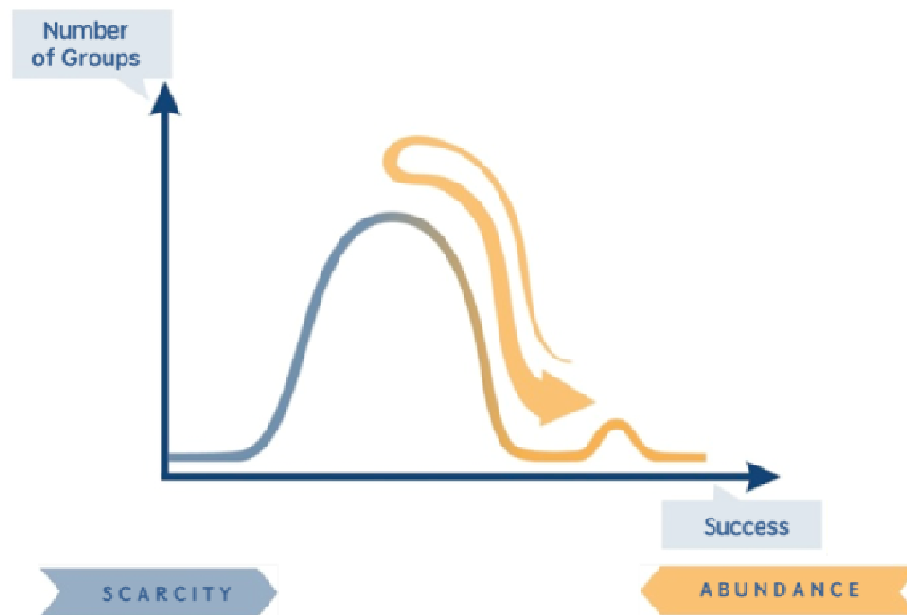
Image 11: It is about finding the positive economic deviance in Ghana. It is also about learning their context specific innovations as well as scaling and multiplying them. Thus, it is finally about transforming old and empowering new structures from within

5.1 What Needs to Shift

Besides strengthening the positive deviance on an operational level (see last chapter), a couple of high leverage points at socio-structural level should also be addressed. First, redefining the criteria for evaluating the outcomes produced by citizens in all sectors appears to be critical. In addition, one needs to revise the charters of the institutions that provide structure for economic, political, cultural and social activities. The existing standards and charters evolved under the influence of economic thinking. It is now possible to rethink them from an ecosynomics perspective.

5.1.1 Standards for Outcomes Evaluating

In the world organized on economic principles, the "gold standard" for judging the results of human endeavor has three elements: efficiency; effectiveness; and innovation. In economic terms, these are typical indicators for assessing how successful people are in managing scarce resources, always with the goal of getting more out of those resources. As social systems move to organizing their activities on the principles of ecosynomics, they will still need standards to help them know how they are doing. It is suggested to continue to use the economic concepts of efficiency, effectiveness and innovation; but redefine them as indicators of how well one is managing the transformation of possibilities and develop them over time to manifest transformative and powerful outcomes instead of only focusing on things/outcomes at the first hand, losing the transformative phase.

5.1.2 Institutional Structures

From the ecosynomics perspective, the purpose of any social system is multidimensional. First, people come together as a system to generate greater value together than they can individually. To do this, the social system grows its potential to develop its abilities over time and thereby increase the value it can generate. The system does this by building cohesion, both within and with other systems it interacts with. Humans make this effort because they desire to increase the wellbeing of the community they serve and the community in which they reside. Said another way, every social

system has a charter for growth, for social cohesion, and for social wellbeing.

All social systems inherently have this multi-dimensional charter in order to exist. Yet most of the institutions we live with today define their purpose in terms of only one of the dimensions and minimize the value of the other two. Legal structures and regulations exist to define and control these one-dimensional institutions. All of this has created a starkly divided society. Individually and together, the institutions operating with these single-focus charters do many things well. They do not, however, deliver the abundance and vibrancy we all want. Why? Ecosynomics suggests two reasons.
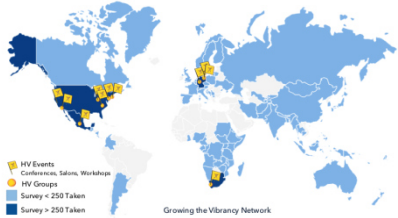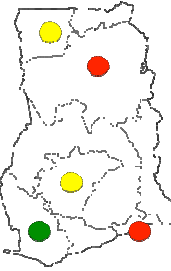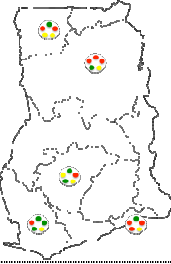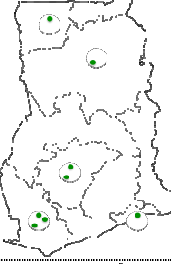
First, they are imbalanced in their focus on only one charter and inattention to the others. These current structures all require legal charters and strong regulation to make sure that their imbalanced structures do not hurt themselves and others. For example, for-growth business is regulated to control the negative consequences of its inattention to social cohesion and social wellbeing. Economists call these "externalities." Likewise, social-cohesion organizations are highly regulated to make sure they collect funds and use them only for charitable purposes, and not for their own growth or personal wellbeing. Government organizations are watched closely by outside social systems to make sure the taxes they collect are used well, since they tax without the ability to support their own growth.
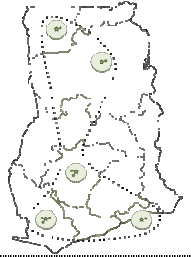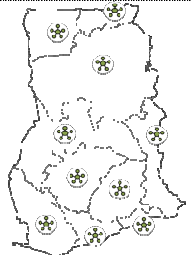
Second, the division of societal institutions into sectors with three distinct roles is based on an incomplete model for organizational forms. This multi-sectoral model suggests that society will be well served if corporations focus on growth of capital; civil society focuses on social cohesion; and government focuses on the overall systems health, through management of the commons. Ecosynomics suggests that every social system should operate on a single charter, which encompasses all three areas: growth, social cohesion, and societal health.

6. A Possible Ghanaian Approach to Benefit from the Research

Connecting to the insights offered in this article, a possible Ghanaian Approach to benefit from the ongoing research and transformational work could identify, scale and multiply the learning's of Ghana's high vibrant social systems. This could be done in their regional context on a national, regional and also global scale. Process and outcomes of such a project give them massive (political) visibility, allowing them to further innovate and thrive locally, regionally and globally. By strengthening and multiplying their insights, this newly emerging pattern of healthier human agreements accelerates the need for positive change in social, economic, political, environmental and cultural terms from within each region in Ghana.

The intention of the Ghanaian Approach is to serve as a starting point for further dialogue. A dialogue of how the Ghanaian Panel on Economic Development might benefit from the research and work around ecosynomics. To our mind, the work with those positive deviants in Ghana is not only the starting point for healthy and balanced progress in Ghana but also the another necessary step to further transform its scarcity driven socio-politic and economic relations in the international arena.

		A Ghanaian Approach (GA) builds e.g. on the experiences of the Vermont and Guatemala case studies as well as on dozens of smaller scale industry specific cases. Moreover, a unique and robust database of positive economic deviance in 90 countries, a field-tested and innovative framework as well as a scientific survey in 11 languages structures the approach. Furthermore, it is part of an active and fast growing, institutional consortium (politics, academia, foundations, media, consultancies) rooted in local-regional networks. Thus, it is integrated into a bigger and reliable environment.
Building Structure		The GA comprises a minimum amount of five pilot regions with regional hosts (NGO's, universities, companies, politicians, elders and or spiritual entities). Thus, the GA consists of institutions reflecting most of the Ghanaian society, giving the undertaking high reliability. All partner institutions commit to step into the role of regional co-hosts, forming the leadership circle that represents the endeavor. The core hosting team is part of the global leadership team from partner-institutions in South Africa, Mexico, Germany and the United States.
Milestone 1		*Finalized regional screening determining the level of theregional vibrancy and possibility to allow economic performance. (green – good/ yellow – medium/ red – bad)* **Outcomes:** 1) The regional partner institutions assessed the regions for positive deviance in collaboration with local mediators (e.g. MBA students). To be able to do so they are trained in the specific methods by Harvard researcher. And ISC staff. 2) The gap between current and aspirational levels of the regional prosperity and vibrancy is determined. 3) The socio-political and cultural influence of the level of vibrancy on the local organizations is understood.
Milestone 2		*Finalized local screening determining the level of organizational vibrancy and economic performance.* **Outcomes:** 4) The regional partner institutions screened their region for positive deviance in collaboration with regional stakeholders and mediators. 5) The gap between current and aspirational levels of the organizational/ local level vibrancy is determined and agreed on by the main local/ organizational stakeholders.
Milestone 3		*Integration of local & regional screening and identification of positive economic deviances.* **Outcomes:** 6) Local and regional stakeholders identified high vibrant, positive economic deviances. 7) High vibrant organizations in the context of their region are being identified. Their local and regional level learning's are being ready for sharing locally, regionally and globally.
Milestone 4		*Online/ Offline innovation hubs and local-regional interventions.* **Outcomes:** 8) The stakeholders of the identified social systems actively meet in their region in innovation hubs. 9) They understood what they are doing to achieve and further maintain their level of vibrancy and performance. Highlighting agreements and practices. 10) Insights are created and massively published (journals, policy recommendations on regional and local level etc.).

Milestone 5		*Cross Regional Learning, Up Scaling & Multiplication* **Outcomes:** 11) Medium vibrant groups attend the hubs, explore the agreements and practices of the high vibrant groups and further assess their own vibrancy. They delineated agreements and practices to increase their own local and regional vibrancy. 12) With the support of the project consortium, the members of the innovation hubs massively publish conditions, agreements and practices that lead to the level of vibrancy at local and regional level. Making the Ghanaian way visible and reproducible.
Milestone 6		*Inviting the millions to redefine the norm on a national scale.* **Outcomes:** 13) Media attention created visibility and attracted thousands of new groups and regions to the project. 14) Learning of the global-regional-local level is used to replicate the process in other regions and countries.

The Ghanaian approach determines the underlying agreements as well as the practices, structures and processes applied by positive economic deviance. The possible milestones allow an understanding of how these high vibrant groups handle the situational conditions in the context of their regional vibrancy level. The findings are being shared in industry specific regional and global innovation hubs in order to enable growth and recommendations on a local-regional and global scale.

Enabling this extensive naming, learning and sharing across and within social systems, regions, cultures and industries of Ghana in a global context makes Ghana's substantial innovations visible and reproducible, thus, making them accessible to everyone everywhere through innovative conferences, massive media attention and 1st tier publications.