

At-a-Glance

Media Backgrounder

The report, going beyond conventional measures and understanding of the ecological crisis and environmental problems, discusses creating the necessary conditions for a sustainable and secure future.

Conventional understanding and measures dealing with the ecological crisis and environmental problems, the report argues, while necessary, they are not sufficient.

It is not enough to address them only at the socio-cultural level, in political, economic, scientific and technological terms.

The conventional approach is managing crises, short and medium-term measures addressing only environmental symptoms and consequences.

Conventional measures—scientific and technological innovation and advances, a low-carbon economy and infrastructure and legislative measures to change behaviour and practices, according to the report, do not address the human causes, deep-rooted problems and developments behind the ecological crisis and environmental problems.

Conventional measures need to take place within the larger context of long-term development changing the way we understand and manage human affairs-- human existence and development.

Conventional measures will provide the time for the necessary long-term development and change.

On their own they will only buy time for a way of understanding and managing human existence and development that is not sustainable.

Only to be confronted later by the same kind of problems, but with less time to resolve them.

The way we traditionally and today understand and manage human affairs contradicts, conflicts with and falls short of the natural conditions, demands and challenges of existence, causing persisting and growing problems and difficulties for the individual, society and the natural environment.

Leading to changes in natural developments that in the long-term will render the natural environment of the Earth uninhabitable for the human species.

Essentially, we meet non-material mental needs in material ways, exploiting and consuming natural resources beyond actual natural human material needs.

We try collectively to create in the world around us, in socio-cultural and physical-material terms, what by nature we must establish individually in the mind and mental existence, through individual mental work and effort.

In the process we interfere in and degrade the natural environment beyond what is necessary to manage human existence and development.

The fundamental problem is, we fail to understand and manage the mind and mental existence.

Traditionally, in religious culture the mind and mental existence are viewed in spiritual terms, as the human sole or spirit, our connection to a supernatural-spiritual world.

In scientific culture the mind and mental existence are understood in material terms, essentially as the neurological structure and workings of the human brain.

We have yet to understand and manage the mind and mental existence as the place where we consciously exist and act, where individually we are in charge and in control, where we must actively be engaged and take responsibility for what takes place and what we do.

The place where we experience, become aware and consider the conditions of existence and the world around us, where we make choices and decisions, where we define goals and objectives, where we plan, organize and manage our behaviour and actions.

We have yet to understand and manage the mind and mental existence as the place where problems and difficulties have their roots and beginnings, and where answers and solutions must start.

As a result, we fail to establish the necessary internal mental conditions, in everything we do and we engage in, before engaging and dealing with the world around us, with nature and the natural environment.

The results and consequences of how we understand and manage human affairs, human existence and development, are persisting and growing problems

and difficulties for the individual and society, with serious consequences for the natural environment.

The consequences for the individual are problems and difficulties understanding and managing individual existence and development, particularly understanding and managing the mind, mental existence and mental development.

The individual has difficulties making sense of its own experience and understand the natural conditions, demands and challenges of existence and the world around us.

Having problems establishing the necessary internal mental conditions before engaging and dealing with external conditions, others and the world around us.

The individual has difficulties dealing with individual problems and difficulties, limits and shortcomings, errors and mistakes, and dealing with, responding and adjusting to change and changing conditions.

Difficulties differentiating between and understanding the role of nature that lies beyond our control, and the role and responsibility in our existence and development that by nature are individually ours to understand and manage.

Being confronted with constant mental disorder and instability, doubt and confusion, uncertainty and insecurity, fear, stress, anxiety and frustration, without knowing how to deal with them.

The results and consequences are escapism into materialism and abstractions.

Meeting non-material mental needs in material ways, making demands on the natural environment beyond natural human material needs.

Looking for, what by nature we must establish individually in the mind and mental existence--a sense of self, an identity, a sense of order and stability, clarity and coherence, certainty and security--externally in the world around us, in socio-cultural and physical-material terms.

In the process interfering in nature and the natural environment beyond what is required to understand and manage human existence.

The social consequences of how we understand and manage existence and development are problematic social relations, practices and institutions, with serious consequences for the natural environment.

Social relations and interactions are defined and governed by human-created socio-cultural beliefs, views, values and conventions, not by the natural conditions, demands and challenges of human existence.

They are not defined and governed by our natural dependence on and need to interact with each other and with the natural environment to meet our basic needs.

Social relations and interactions are defined and governed by hierarchically structured social positions, roles and functions in the collective whole.

The consequences are problems and difficulties relating and interacting, communicating and cooperating with each other to meet, particularly the mental needs for which by nature we depend on and must interact with each other.

The result are unmet mental needs which we try to meet in material ways, in competition with each other, through the possession, accumulation and consumption of material resources, making demands on nature, natural resources and the natural environment beyond actual human natural material needs.

Problematic social practices arising from how we understand and manage human existence and development include dividing and separating an integrated, connected and related reality and conditions of existence, and managing human affairs into different issues, areas of human activity, and different social positions, roles and functions, arranging them hierarchically.

It includes dividing and separating thought and practice, understanding and action, mental and physical work and effort into different, hierarchically structured social positions, roles and functions.

With thought, understanding, mental work and effort taking place at the top of the social structure, and practice, action, physical work and effort, acting on thought, understanding and mental work and effort, taking place further down in the structure.

It includes specialization beyond actual human needs, and inappropriate and insufficient conceptual and mental development, and the development of insufficient and inappropriate understanding, skills and practices.

We develop and specialize in the knowledge and skills, tools and methods to understand, manage and improve external conditions, to rearrange, control and direct nature, natural processes and developments, while we fail to develop the understanding, the mental powers and abilities, mental skills and practices to understand and manage our existence and development within existing and changing conditions, at the level of the natural conditions, within the limits set by nature.

How we understand and manage human existence and development leads to the development of social institutions not designed to understand and manage human existence and development existing in and as part of a constantly changing world, within the natural boundaries.

Social institutions not designed to understand and manage the role and responsibility in our existence and development that by nature are individually ours to understand and manage.

It leads to the development of social institutions designed to establish and maintain order and stability, certainty and security externally in the world around us, provide an ordered, stable, secure and predictable world around us of easy material abundance.

The social consequences of how we understand and manage human affairs are competition, conflict and confrontation, within and between societies and cultures about shared resources and about different beliefs, views, values and practices.

Competition, conflict and confrontation within societies and cultures between individuals, over social status, power and prestige, social positions, roles and functions, and about material possession, accumulation and consumption; and between the individual and the collective over individual and collective conditions, needs, demands and challenges.

Competition, conflict and confrontation between societies and cultures over territory and natural resources, and about different beliefs, views, values and conventions, different ways of understanding and managing existence and development, different structures of identity, order and stability, certainty and security.

The results are domination, exploitation, deprivation and marginalization, injustice and inequality, poverty and starvation, ethnic, racial, gender and generational discrimination, conflict and confrontation.

How we understand and manage existence and development leads to the development of ever larger, more complex and costly social institutions.

Growing diversity in human activity, specialization and expertise leads to a proliferation in social positions, roles and functions, social institutions, rules and regulations, resulting in rising demand upon the natural environment for natural resources.

It adds to the exploitation and consumption of natural resources beyond actual human natural material needs, and interference in and degradation of the natural environment beyond what is necessary.

The answers and solutions, dealing with the ecological crisis and environmental problems and creating the necessary conditions for a sustainable, peaceful and secure future requires changing the way we understand and manage human affairs, human existence and development.

It requires understanding and managing existence and development, demands and challenges, problems and difficulties, change and changing conditions, everything in life we face and we have to deal with, from the inside out and from the ground up, in their essence, in an integrated or holistic way.

Not understanding and managing them, as traditionally is the case, from the top down and from the outside in, in a fragmented way in the abstract.

It requires understanding and managing existence and development at the level and within the context of understanding and managing, in the first instance, the mind, mental existence and mental development, from inside the mind and mental existence, as reflected in individual experience.

Understanding and managing existence and development at the level of the natural conditions of existence that are common to all human beings, which in the first instance define and govern human existence, that lie behind and that are reflected in human experience, the experience of every individual human being.

Understanding and managing them in their essence, in depth and detail, in a holistic, differentiated, but integrated, connected and related way.

Not, as traditionally is the case, understanding and managing existence and development from the human-created socio-cultural level down to the level of the individual, and the level of the natural conditions of existence.

Not dividing and separating the conditions of existence into different issues, subject matters, disciplines, fields of study, and areas of human activity, specialization and expertise, defined and governed by different, competing and conflicting assumptions, objectives, approaches and practices.

Establishing the necessary internal mental conditions, before engaging and dealing with external conditions and the world around us.

Not trying to create the ideal external, socio-cultural and physical-material conditions of an ordered, stable, secure and predictable world around us of easy material abundance.

Dealing with the ecological crisis and environmental problems, creating the necessary conditions for a sustainable and secure future requires changing focus from managing the economy to managing human existence and development.

The economy is concerned only with one aspect of human existence, meeting human material needs, and it does not deal with the more important part, the mind and mental existence.

Creating the conditions necessary for a sustainable and secure future requires understanding and managing human existence and development at the level of the individual, in all areas of human activity and at all levels and in all sectors of society, not macro-managing the economy from a higher level up, internationally or globally.

Improving human existence needs to take place in the first instance in mental terms, through improving understanding and managing the mind and mental existence, not in material terms, through growing material possession and consumption, managing, controlling and rearranging the world around us.

Changing the way we understand and manage human existence and development requires cultural change and transformation with every culture, changing the historical path and direction of development.

Creating the conditions for a sustainable and secure future requires taking the next step in human conceptual and mental development and growth.

Moving beyond religion, philosophy and science in understanding and managing human affairs--understanding and managing the conditions, demands and challenges of human existence and development.

Taking the next step beyond the reason, rationality and systematic inquiry of Greek philosophy, the Scientific Revolution of the 15-17th Century of applying reason, rationality and systematic inquiry to the physical world, and the 18th Century Age of Enlightenment of applying them to understanding and managing human affairs.

The next step in human conceptual and mental development and growth involves establishing independence of mind and understanding about the conditions of existence.

It requires understanding the conditions of human existence and development, in contrast to understanding the physical world around us, and understanding the conditions of individual existence and development, in contrast to understanding the conditions of the larger social collective whole--society.

It requires making the process of human conceptual and mental development and growth an active process, that is defined and governed by the natural conditions, demands and challenges of existence, in contrast to being a reactive process, as traditionally has been the case, driven by human-created socio-cultural and physical-material development, engineering and construction.

Changing the way we understand and manage human affairs requires education and training in conceptual and mental development, developing the required conceptual foundation and mental capacity.

Developing, exercising and practicing in the individual the necessary understanding, the human natural mental potential, individual natural mental powers and abilities, appropriate mental skills and practices.

In contrast to traditional education of socialization and training only in established socio-cultural conditions, beliefs, views, values and conventions, established ways of understanding and managing human existence and development.

Developing, exercising and practicing in the individual a process of continuous, life-long conceptual and mental self-development and growth.

Constantly reconsidering, updating, correcting, expanding and improving the understanding, mental powers and abilities, mental skills and practices we develop, on which we rely, how we develop and used them, in light of change and changing conditions.

Dealing with, responding and adjusting to change and changing conditions when only a minimum in mental work and effort are required and before they develop into larger problems and difficulties.

Creating the necessary conditions for a sustainable, peaceful and secure future requires making the 21st Century the Century of the mind, mental existence and mental development.

Not the scientific study of the mind as a natural phenomena or just another human organ.

But understanding and managing the mind and mental existence as the place where we consciously exist and act, where individually we are in charge and in control, where we must actively be engaged and take responsibility for what takes place and what we do.

Institute for Human Conceptual and Mental Development (IHCMD)
Ottawa, ON Canada
Tel: (613) 233-8354
E-mail: info_at_ihcmd.org
Website: <http://www.ihcmd.org>