



PLANETARY LEADERSHIP AT COP 30: WHY SCIENCE NEEDS INNER DEVELOPMENT TO SHAPE OUR FUTURE

A REFLECTION

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A PERSONAL NOTE OF GRATITUDE AND TRANSITION

With deep gratitude to the Inner Development Goals Foundation, whose work illuminated the inner landscape during a profound turning point in my life. Especially co-leading Oceania's research efforts toward the creation of the new Inner Development Guide (below).

After the death of my husband, I entered a cycle of endings and slow emergence that reshaped my sense of Being and the way I meet uncertainty. In that quiet terrain, new Thinking took form, relationships deepened in meaning and the capacity to Collaborate returned in more grounded and intentional ways.

From this, a renewed sense of Acting arose, steady, values based and responsive to what this moment is asking of us.

This personal passage, moving through grief into regeneration, sits alongside the wider transition explored in this reflection.

We cannot yet know how COP30 will unfold, but its focus invites all of us to consider what kind of inner development is needed for the work ahead. My own journey has revealed that inner transformation is an essential complement to scientific and technical expertise.

What follows is offered from within that arc of renewal, with the hope that our shared efforts, inspired by caring for others and the wider world, may help shape a world that works for everyone.

INNER DEVELOPMENT GUIDE

| Being Cultivating Our Inner Life | Thinking Understanding Our Complex World | Relating Caring for Others and the World | Collaborating Building Trust and Working Together | Acting Leading and Enabling Change |
|-------------------------------------|---|---|--|---------------------------------------|
| Inner Compass | Critical Thinking | Appreciation | Relationship-Building Skills | Courage |
| Integrity & Authenticity | Perspective Skills | Connectedness | Inclusive Mindset & Intercultural Competence | Hope & Optimism |
| Openness & Learning Mindset | Systems Thinking | Humility | Co-creation Skills | Conscious Use of Resources |
| Self-Awareness | Long-term Orientation & Visioning | Empathy & Compassion | Communication Skills | Proactivity |
| Presence | Creativity | Forgiveness | Mobilization Skills | Resilience |

INTRODUCTION: WHY WRITE THIS NOW?

For many years, scientific evidence has informed the COP process through bodies such as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA). Yet COP30 reflects a shift in how visibly and collaboratively science is being held. The new Planetary Science Pavilion in the Blue Zone brings scientific voices into closer proximity with negotiators, supporting more grounded and informed decision making.

Much of what follows has been shaped by global conversations throughout 2025, including those within the Inner Development community. These exchanges brought together voices from many parts of the world, reflecting shared aspirations and diverse lived experiences that highlight why inner development is now essential for planetary leadership.

The pavilion, shaped by Future Earth, the Earth Commission, the Global Commons Alliance and the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research (PIK), places planetary science where it is most needed: in direct conversation with global policy processes. As a reflection of global urgency, it demonstrates that the world is turning toward planetary boundaries, safe and just operating spaces and Earth-systems governance.

Yet even as science becomes more visible within global governance, a deeper truth continues to emerge across disciplines and cultures: *knowledge alone does not create wise decisions*. What is being asked of us now is not purely intellectual. It is inner, relational and systemic.

This insight sits at the heart of the Oceania Contribution to the IDG Summit 2025, which explored the inner development required for planetary stewardship and the essential partnership between sustainable and regenerative leadership.

This present reflection continues that work in the context of COP30, where the question is no longer only What do we know? but Who do we need to become?

THE WORLD IS ASKING FOR A BIGGER STORY

The Enlightenment offered the world remarkable tools. It was a period, mainly in 17th- and 18th-century Europe, when people began exploring new ways of understanding the world through reason, observation and scientific inquiry. From this era came the scientific method, modern engineering, major advances in physics, chemistry, biology and medicine, as well as evolving ideas about democracy and human rights.

These contributions remain essential to society. At the same time, much of this thinking emerged within WEIRD cultures: Western, Educated, Industrialised, Rich and Democratic societies. Research by cultural psychologists Joseph Henrich, Steven Heine and Ara Norenzayan, whose work has shaped global understanding of how culture influences the mind, shows that WEIRD patterns of reasoning are not universal but reflect a specific cultural context. These cultures tend to emphasise analytical thinking, abstraction and individualism, often prioritising control and categorisation over relational or ecological ways of knowing.

For most cultures within the Global Majority, knowledge has always been relational. Communities have long understood themselves as part of ecosystems rather than separate from them. They have focused on reciprocity, belonging and ecological identity rather than dominance or control.

As COP30 unfolds, it is increasingly clear that we cannot rely on a single cultural story of progress. We need a wider, pluriversal understanding of wisdom. Indigenous knowledge, ecological belonging and relational intelligence are not alternative perspectives. They are essential.

WHERE THE TERM “GLOBAL MAJORITY” COMES FROM

The phrase Global Majority has gained prominence over the last decade across academic, racial equity and decolonial fields. It reflects a demographic reality: more than **85 percent** of the world’s population is Indigenous, Black, Brown, Asian, Pacific Islander, Latin American or of mixed heritage.

It replaces deficit-based language such as “minorities”, which implicitly centres Western identities as the norm. Scholars such as sociologist Heidi Safia Mirza, cultural theorist Gargi Bhattacharyya and decolonial educator Vanessa Andreotti have helped shape the contemporary use of the term Global Majority across academia and equity-led organisations.

At ProVeritas Leadership, we use this term deliberately. It reflects:

- dignity rather than deficit
- accuracy rather than assumption
- a global rather than provincial worldview

Climate disruption disproportionately affects Global Majority populations while relying heavily on their stewardship of the world's remaining biodiversity. Recognising this truth is central to planetary governance.

SCIENCE AND COLONISATION: A MEMORY THAT STILL SHAPES TRUST

As planetary science takes its place at the centre of COP30, it is important to acknowledge something many communities already know deeply: science has not always been experienced as neutral or benevolent.

Scientific institutions historically evolved alongside colonial systems. Expeditions mapped lands that were later claimed. Minerals and species were classified for extraction. Biological theories were misused to justify racial hierarchies. Indigenous environmental knowledge was often ignored, appropriated or overwritten.

These histories are still alive in communities today. Hesitation or mistrust is often not due to lack of understanding but due to long-held embodied memories. Recognising this does not weaken science. It humanises it. It makes collaboration possible.

At [ProVeritas Leadership](#), this awareness is foundational. Our commitment is to support more just, inclusive scientific cultures. We acknowledge that the Global Majority and Indigenous peoples have carried the consequences of extraction while safeguarding much of the planet's ecological resilience. This informs our ethos and actions.

UNDERSTANDING STEM: WHY THESE PROFESSIONS MATTER AT COP30

STEMM refers to five interconnected fields:

- Science
- Technology
- Engineering
- Mathematics
- Medicine

STEMM professionals include scientists, technologists, engineers, mathematicians, doctors, researchers, climate modellers, data analysts and many more. Today, more than 300-400 million STEMM professionals form approximately 11 percent of the global workforce. Their expertise drives solutions in climate adaptation, public health, biodiversity protection, clean energy, infrastructure resilience and responsible AI governance.

Organisations such as the Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD) are now strongly calling for more [STEMM voices at the executive and board levels](#) because they bring evidence-based thinking, systems awareness and clarity in uncertain times.

COP30 is widely described as the “implementation COP”, i.e., a summit designed to move from ambition to delivery. That focus aligns strongly with the strengths of STEMM leaders: turning knowledge into action, building solutions and operationalising change.

The good news is that STEMM knowledge is everywhere. However, expertise alone is not enough. The world increasingly needs STEMM professionals who can:

- communicate across disciplines and cultures
- build trust with communities who carry historical harm
- translate data into insight and meaning
- navigate political and emotional complexity
- lead with clarity, compassion and integrity

This is where inner development becomes indispensable. And it is why the [STEMM Influence Lab](#) exists.



INNER DEVELOPMENT AND SUSTAINABLE-REGENERATIVE LEADERSHIP

The Inner Development Goals (IDGs) began as a framework of twenty-three inner and relational capacities aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Over time, it became clear that the IDGs pointed toward deeper shifts in how humanity understands growth and responsibility.

This led to the co-creation of the [Inner Development Guide](#) - a practice-oriented framework that:

- deepens the five IDG dimensions (Being, Thinking, Relating, Collaborating, Acting)
- emphasises systemic and relational development
- supports embodiment and applied practice

This evolution aligns with the [Oceania Discussion Paper on Planetary Stewardship](#) in preparation for the IDG Summit 2025, which highlighted the synergy between sustainable and regenerative leadership.

- **Sustainable leadership** protects the conditions that support life.
- **Regenerative leadership** restores, renews and enriches ecological, social and cultural systems.

Together they:

- honour limits
- protect what is essential
- repair what has been harmed
- create conditions for flourishing

The integration of the Inner Development Guide with sustainable–regenerative leadership offers a unified path for planetary stewardship. Inner development builds the capacities for sustainable action; regenerative leadership transforms those capacities into practices that heal and enrich the world.

WHY THE STEMM INFLUENCE LAB HAS BECOME URGENT

Many STEMM professionals carry extraordinary expertise yet have had limited support to develop the inner, relational and systemic capacities required to influence decisions in complex, high-stakes environments. Increasingly, business leaders face the same challenge.

In every sector - from energy, finance and healthcare to technology, infrastructure and manufacturing - leaders are navigating uncertainty, accelerated change and heightened societal expectations. Technical excellence matters. But it is no longer enough.

Today's world needs leaders, in STEMM and in business, who can:

- bridge evidence with human impact
- speak across cultures, disciplines and worldviews
- regulate themselves under pressure and maintain clarity of mind
- build trust in environments marked by polarisation or historical harm
- translate complexity into meaning that guides wise action
- work with uncertainty without collapsing into overwhelm
- lead with coherence, compassion and moral courage

The [STEMM Influence Lab](#) was created to meet precisely this need.

It offers a psychologically grounded, practice-oriented pathway for developing capacities that strengthen leadership in every context - scientific, commercial, governmental and community-based. Participants cultivate:

- systems thinking for interconnected challenges
- ethical clarity in decision making
- emotional maturity and resilience

- relational presence and communication that builds trust
- cross-cultural competence for global collaboration
- ecological identity and awareness of planetary limits
- inner steadiness that supports wise, grounded influence

The Lab also holds a strong commitment to the Global Majority, recognising that planetary leadership must reflect the full diversity of human experience, knowledge systems and cultural perspectives. Business leaders increasingly understand that diversity, equity and inclusion are not peripheral issues. They are central to innovation, risk management and long-term value creation. The Lab integrates these insights into its core design.

By strengthening the inner foundations of leadership, the STEMM Influence Lab supports professionals in every sector to navigate complexity with integrity, collaborate across differences and contribute to solutions that are sustainable and regenerative. It prepares leaders, not only to succeed in their fields, but to help shape a future in which businesses, societies and ecosystems can thrive together.

A NEW CHAPTER FOR PLANETARY STEWARDSHIP

The emergence of the Planetary Science Pavilion at COP30 suggests that the world may be ready for a different relationship with knowledge. One that values scientific insight while also acknowledging its cultural roots. One that honours evidence while recognising the importance of trust, memory and relationship. One that invites us to bring intellect, emotion and meaning back into coherence.

To meet this moment, we will need more than technical solutions. We will need the inner capacities that allow people to work across cultures, histories and worldviews. We will need leaders who can remain steady in uncertainty, listen with humility and act with courage even when the path forward is not guaranteed.

This is the orientation at the heart of inner development and the Inner Development Guide. It complements sustainable leadership by asking us to protect the conditions that sustain life, and it extends regenerative leadership by supporting the renewal of systems that have been harmed. These approaches sit alongside many other traditions: Indigenous governance, community leadership, scientific collaboration, policy making and private-sector innovation. All contributing to the possibility of a just and liveable future.

The STEMM Influence Lab is simply one contribution to this wider landscape. It exists because so many STEMM professionals carry essential knowledge yet have had limited support for the inner and relational demands of influence.

The STEMM Influence Lab offers a place to practise the capacities that help technical expertise land in ways that are understood, trusted and acted upon. It is not a solution,

but a response to the reality that planetary challenges require both scientific insight and human depth.

If there is one message carried through COP30, it is that no single community will lead us forward alone. We will need scientists, technologists, engineers, mathematicians, medical professionals, business leaders, Indigenous knowledge holders, youth, elders and whole communities working together. Each bringing their own experience, responsibility and care.

Planetary stewardship is not the task of a few. It is the shared work of our time.

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