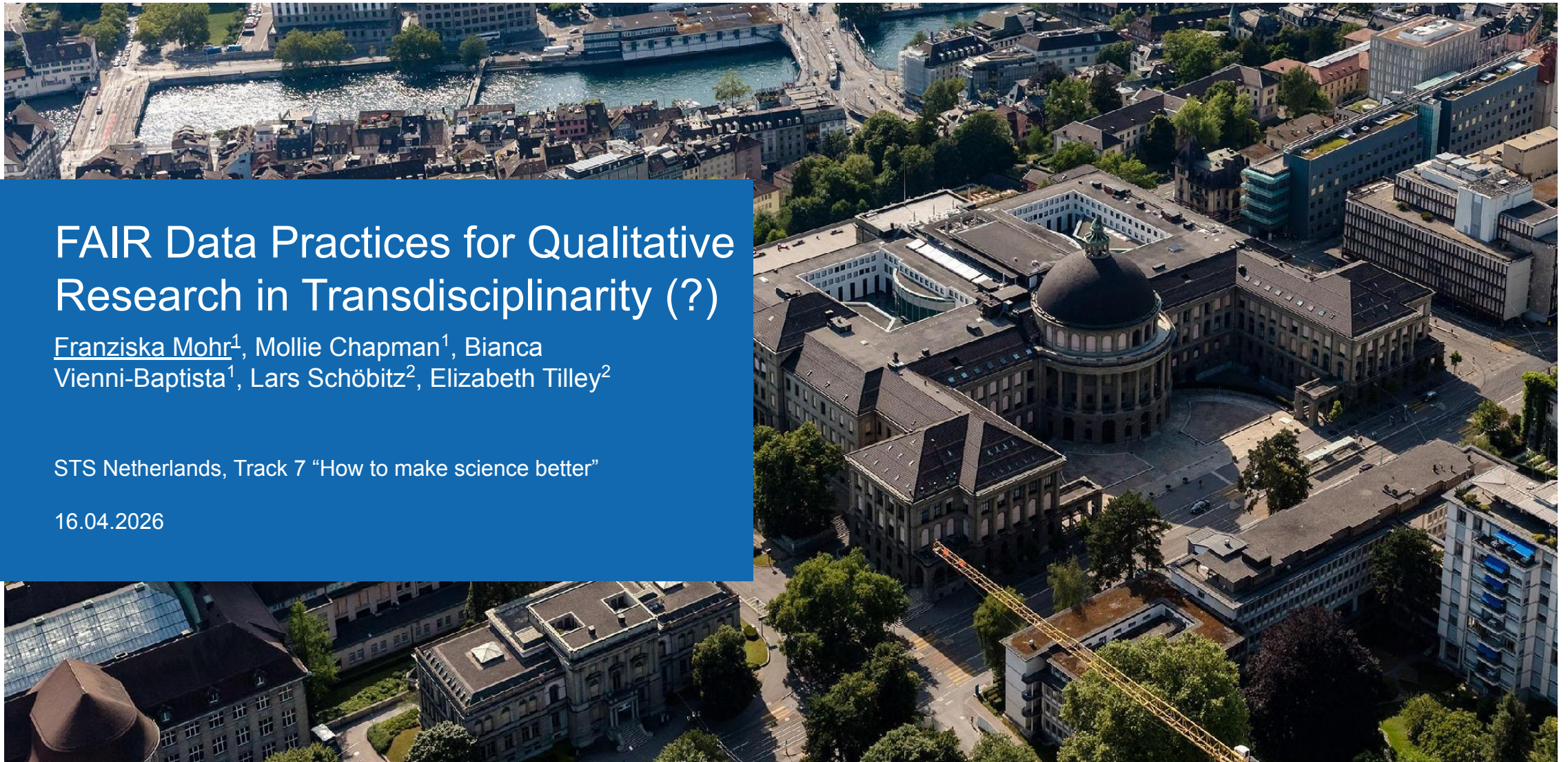


# FAIR Data Practices for Qualitative Research in Transdisciplinarity (?)

Franziska Mohr<sup>1</sup>, Mollie Chapman<sup>1</sup>, Bianca Vienni-Baptista<sup>1</sup>, Lars Schöbitz<sup>2</sup>, Elizabeth Tilley<sup>2</sup>

STS Netherlands, Track 7 “How to make science better”

16.04.2026





# “getting some fresh air”

How much do you engage with open science practices?

I think I heard of it

Engaging in all types



How familiar are you with the FAIR principles?

FAIR what?

I basically invented them



How serious do you engage with data management? I would find / understand data from 10 years ago...

... in a “could take a while”

... in a few seconds



# FAIRqual project



Franziska Mohr



Mollie Chapman



Bianca Vienni-Baptista



Lars Schöbitz



Liz Tilley

# FAIR data principles

## Aim:

**Guide to capture essential characteristics of data objects to make data reusable for humans and machines**

- **F**indable
  - I.e. (Meta)data have a persistent identifier
- **A**ccessible
  - I.e. (Meta)data are retrievable (open or authentication / authorization procedure where necessary)
- **I**nteroperable
  - (Meta)data use a formal, broadly applicable language for knowledge representation to integrate them with other data
- **R**eusable
  - I.e. (Meta)data are well-described with accurate and relevant attributes

# FAIR data principles & better science



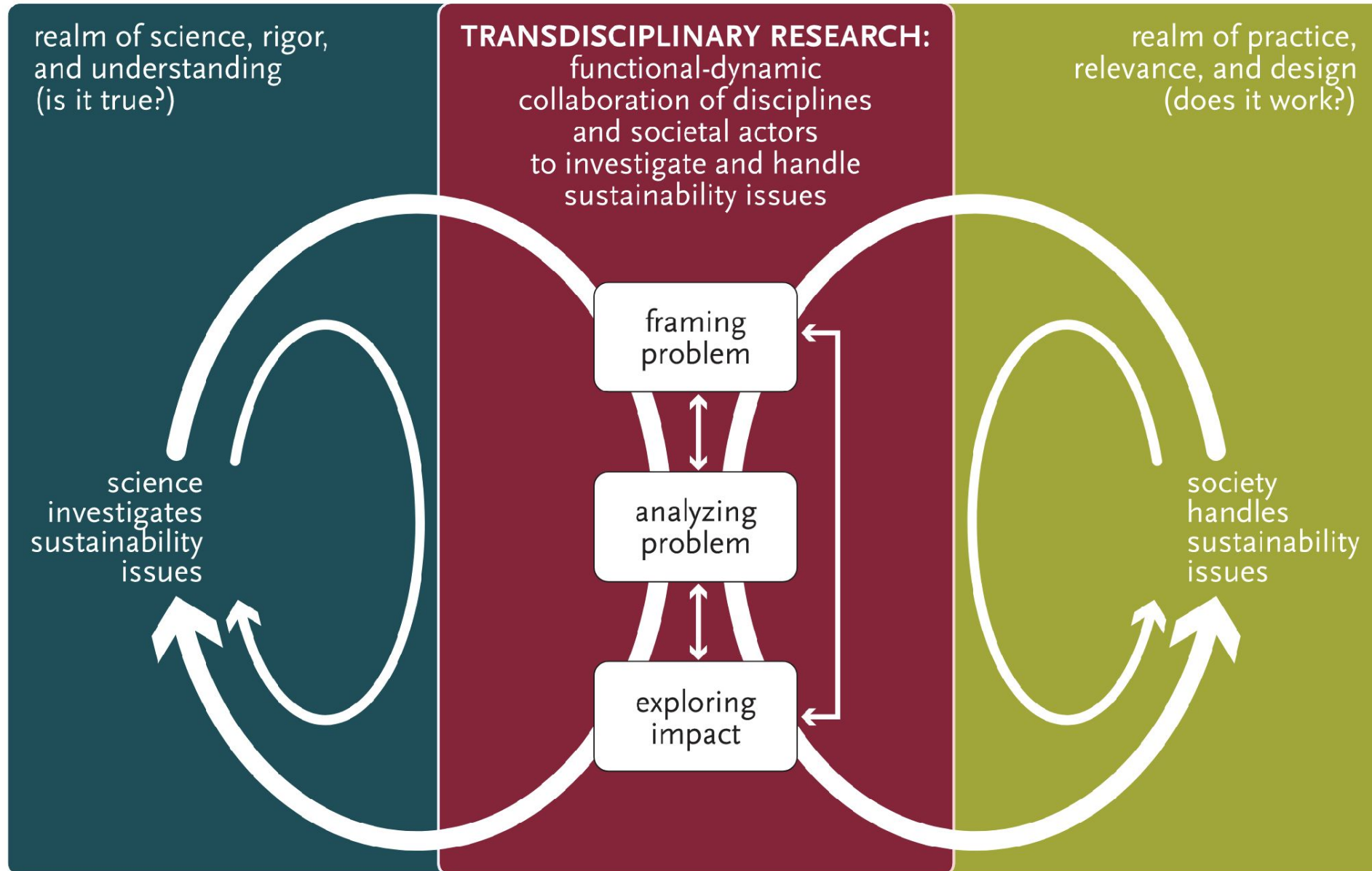
... some intentions

- Breaking down data silos
- Reducing duplication of data while encouraging reuse of data and discovery
- Enabling transparency and reproducibility (reproducibility crisis)
- Making data machine actionable

...and its institutionalisation

- Increasing uptake in academic landscape (e.g. funding calls, publishing)

# Transdisciplinary (Td) research



# Qualitative data in Td Research

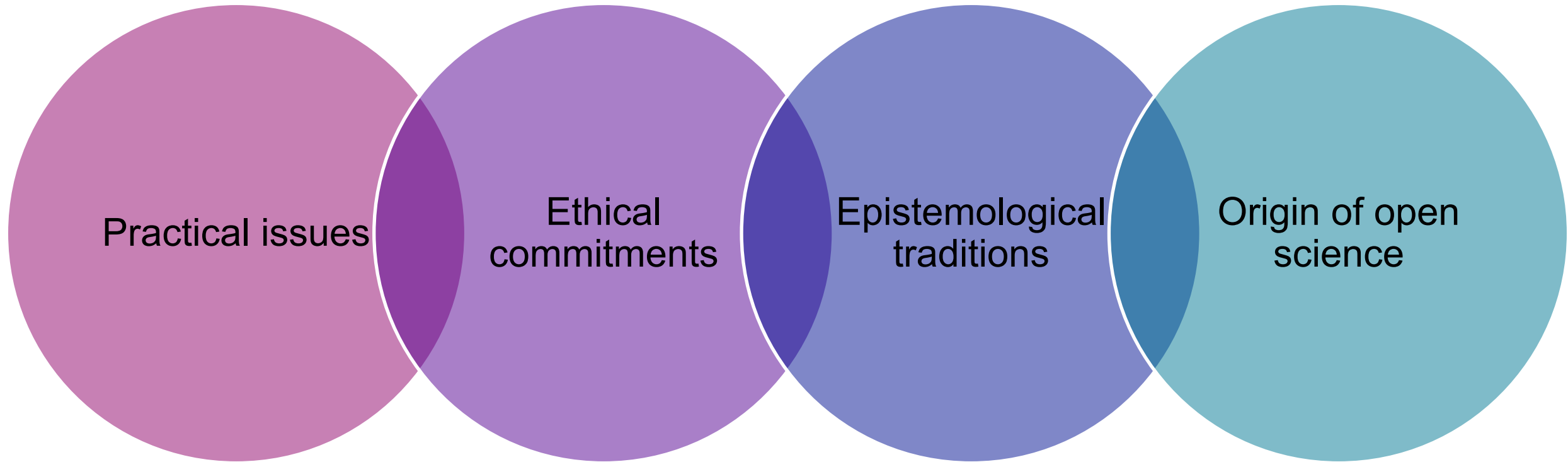
- **Interviews**, focus groups, oral (hi)stories, informal talks
- **Workshops** outputs (flip charts, post-it notes)
- Audiovisual (photos or videos)
- Participant observation and fieldnotes
- Mapping
- Artistic outputs
- ...



S. B. Rhomberg Photography

*FAIRqual Workshop at IT24, November 2024*

# Challenges of sharing qualitative data



# FAIRqual project

- Explore how to apply FAIR principles for qualitative data in Td research...
  - ... from a conceptual angle
  - ... from a technical angle
- Based on what?
  - Workshop at ITD2024 – “feeling the pulse”
  - Expert interviews with Td researchers and open science experts (ongoing; 8 completed, 7 in planning)
  - Existing literature and current discussions
- Develop guidelines and “demos” based on data collected during FAIRqual

<https://fairqual.org>



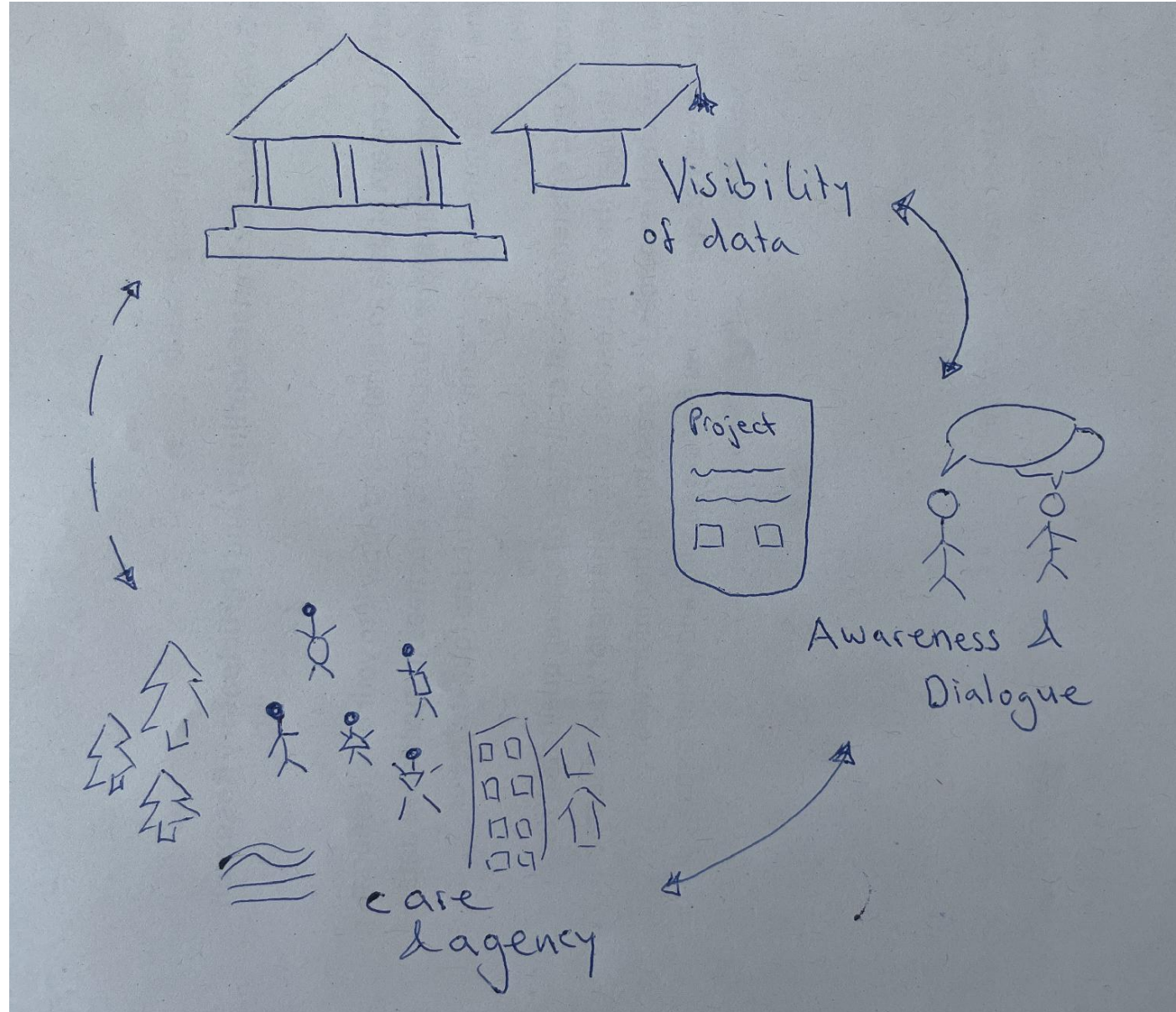
Project website



Shifting the focus from figuring out how to apply FAIR principles...

# ... to thinking about (reflective) data governance

(work in progress)



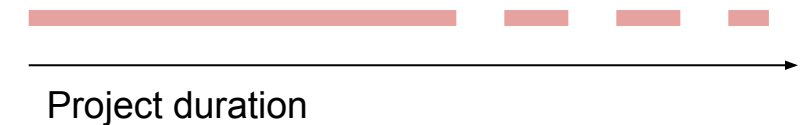
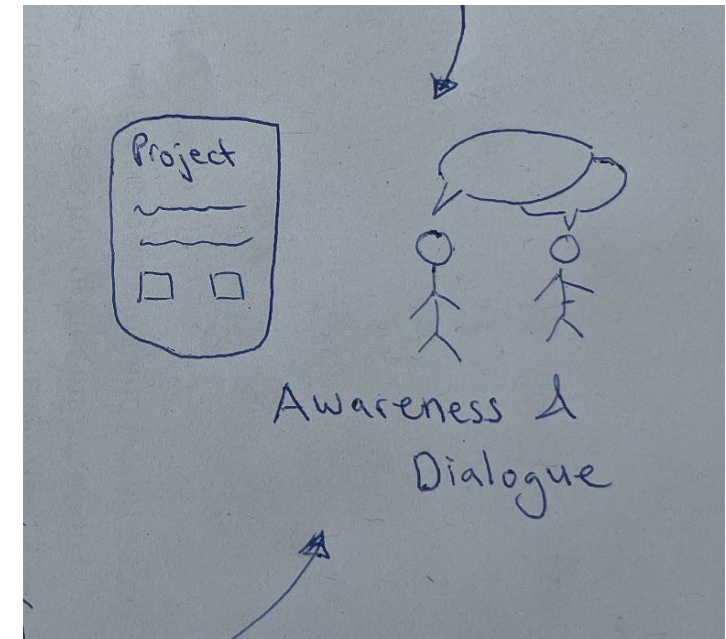
# Awareness & Dialogue

Central idea:

- Be aware of long-term archiving options (incl. ORD / FAIR principles) as a researcher
- Raise dialogue about shared data governance with practice partners
- Inspiration: CARE principles, data agreements

Points to think about:

- What is the potential sensitivity of the data collected?
- Could the collected data be useful beyond research? (knowledge, skills?)
- What other information / benefit can the project offer?
- Who should access it / who can decide / where to archive?



# Care & agency

## Central idea:

- “Do no harm” – every project is different
- Dynamically adapt to needs and wishes from research participants
- Informed consent (not necessarily only written) as a moment to clarify

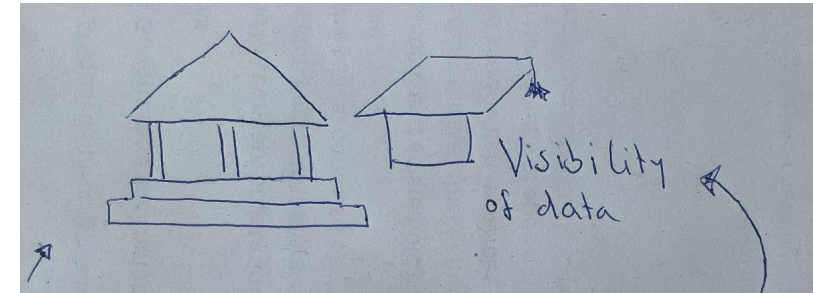
## Points to think about:

- How anonymous would research participants like to be?
- Offer choices for long-term data management
- Introduce processual informed consent
- Give back transcripts for review as an option



Project duration

# Visibility of data



## Central idea:

- Personal long-term data management as starting point
- “As open as possible”; repositories or similar platforms as a way to make data and / or context thereof visible

## Points to think about:

- “Play” with level of access and processing level
- Which outlets address the need of the project?
- Keep development of AI in mind – some friction is maybe sometimes wanted

Project duration

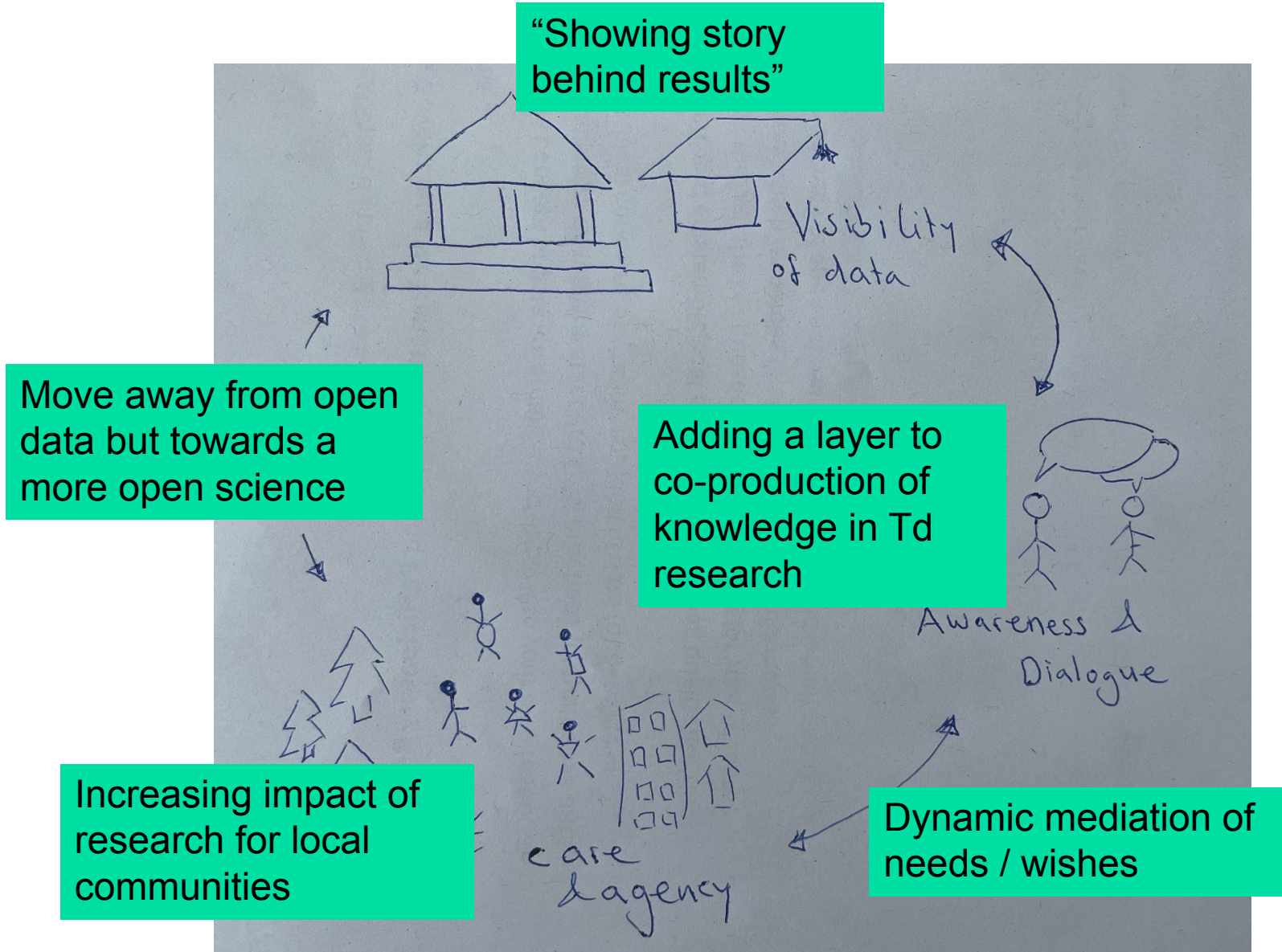
does ai readiness of data make science better?

not approved

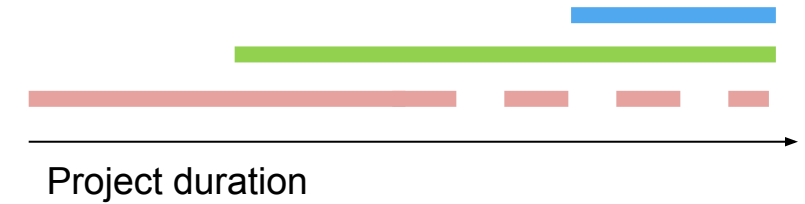


Yes, **AI-readiness** is arguably the single most transformative "upgrade" to the FAIR principles. While FAIR makes data *available*, AI-readiness makes it **actionable at scale**.

# Possible facets of making science better



Long-term data management could provide a lower entry point



*“Cause open science, it's not just about outputs, right? It's about the process. And that's often overlooked in the way open science is framed or normalized or understood, like around infrastructures and sharing things.”*  
(Interview 9)

# Outlook



## Road ahead for project

- Wrap up interview series and finalize analysis
- Workshop to “test” findings by applying them to an ongoing Td project
- Summarize findings in a paper “what questions to ask oneself at what time” and an e-learning module

# Literature

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Pohl, C., Krütli, P. & Stauffacher, M. (2017) Ten reflective Steps for Rendering Research Societally Relevant. *GAIA – Ecological perspectives for Science and Society*, 26(1), 43-51. <https://10.14512/gaia.26.1.10>

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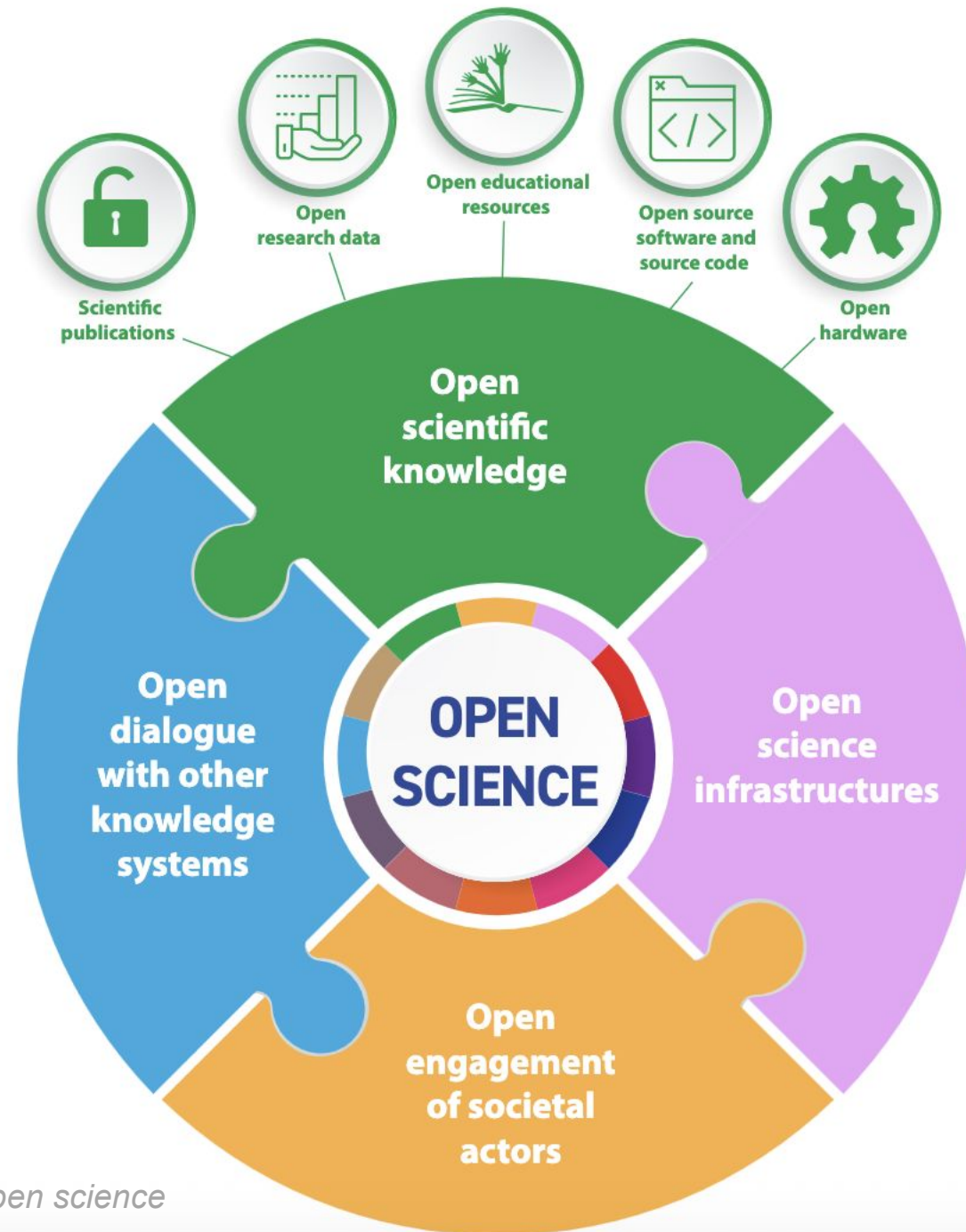
Thank you for your attention!

Questions & comments

Let me know if you would like to  
stay in contact!  
([franziska.mohr@usys.ethz.ch](mailto:franziska.mohr@usys.ethz.ch))



# Unesco Open Science



# Challenges of sharing qualitative data: Epistemological traditions

1. “you had to be there”
  1. Importance of embodied research (being in the place, feeling what happened)
  2. Integration of emotion, experience, context
2. Need to immerse yourself in the data to analyze it properly

# Challenges of sharing qualitative data: Ethical commitments

1. Standard research ethics require confidentiality (informed consent)
  1. To protect participants – "do no harm"
  2. To create an atmosphere of trust
2. Sharing fears
  1. Misuse of shared data
  2. Politization of data
  3. Loss of context

# Challenges of sharing qualitative data: Practical issues

1. Anonymization - e.g. interviews
  1. Many hundreds of pages of transcripts that require often detailed reading to fully anonymize
  2. Removing names is not enough...
  3. Audio recordings are highly personal (esp. with AI...)
2. Heterogenous data - e.g. workshops
  1. What to share and how to document?

| PAPER  | Audio-Visual  | Contextual Data  | Intangibles   |
|--|---|--|---|
| Collaboration Guide<br>Post-It<br>Flipchart<br>Mind maps<br>Working Notes<br>Rich Pictures<br>Participant Lists<br>Reports<br>Personal Notes / Field notes<br>Key words<br>Lists of Measurements<br>Dot-mocracy<br>Guidelines + Factsheets | PPT Slides<br>Photos<br>Videos<br>Maps<br>Constructions from Legos<br>Collage<br>Zines<br>Vision Boards | Prototypes<br>Spreadsheets<br>News Coverage<br>Bills<br>Catering Leftovers<br>E-mail lists<br>Logistical Documents | Networks<br>Knowledge<br>New Ideas<br>A Mindset<br><u>Mess</u><br>New Concepts + Methods<br>Working Groups<br>X-1 Diff Interest Groups<br>Questions<br>Negotiations<br>Personal Experience<br>Stress + Fatigue<br>Fun<br>Hot Air<br>Social Dynamics |

Brainstorming workshop artefacts, TdLab Brown Bag Lunch March 18, 2025

# Challenges of sharing qualitative data: Origin of Open Science practices

1. Current movement mostly based in quantitative tradition means not always suited to qualitative or Td data and traditions
  1. Not identifying with open science movement creates hesitance
  2. Importance of qualitative researcher in shaping the conversation

*“I think that there is something that does not make sense in wanting to apply quantitative research trends to qualitative methods.”*

quote from online survey in Prosser et al. (preprint): It's time to join the conversation: Visions of the Future for Qualitative Transparency and Openness in Management and Organisation Studies.

# FAIRqual interview guide

- ***Personal experience***
- **Agency of research participants and collaborators**
  - *Informed consent to open data; involve research participants*
  - *Possibilities of shared data governance; organisation of shared data governance*
- **Levels of sharing qualitative data**
  - *Anonymization; access control; sharing of partial data*
- **Broader realities of sharing qualitative data**
  - *AI as a risk or opportunity*
  - *Institutional possibilities & restrictions*