Nordic by Nature

New voices on deep ecology;
Arne Naess in the 21st century.

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Voices on Deep Ecology

We all understand on some level that we are biological beings. Our bodies are made up from the elements of nature; water, air, earth, space and fire. Nature's elements are present in each cell. The production and use of energy are integral to our physiology. All this energy we gain from nature.

Our mental wellbeing is also deeply connected to the natural world. A flower, a clear blue sky and sunshine all lift our spirits as much as a grey Autumn morning can make us calm and reflective. We all feel a deep connection with nature on some level.

How can we increase awareness of how we are deeply connected to each other and the natural world? How can we connect our 'inner'

and ‘outer’ resilience for greater harmony and balance for all the people on this planet? Is it possible to create new types of systems that offer us all genuinely sustainable livelihoods?

We met at a conference in Delhi called Tasting India in 2017 - we being Ajay Rastogi, founder of the Foundation for the Contemplation of Nature in India, and Tanya Kim Grassley, founder of the creative network Imaginary Life, in Sweden. We soon got talking about the Norwegian Philosopher, Arne Naess, and his definition of Deep ecology.

Deep ecology is, on the surface, the basic concept that all life on earth is an important and integral part a self-sustaining planetary system. With Deep ecology in mind, it is not difficult to grasp that human equity must also be integrated into the way we view ourselves as part of the natural world. With ‘deep actions’ of all kinds we can start to dream-create a new way of living on this planet.

We decided to start interviewing people who are keeping Naess’ thinking alive. This book of transcripts is the result of 26 recorded interviews from 2019 that resulted in 11 audio podcasts called Nordic By Nature, in honour of Naess.

Our interviewees are not chosen to represent society at large, but because of their ability to follow their inner voice, and how they have repeatedly set aside opportunities for material gain to follow a lifelong journey of transformation. Accordingly, the interviews are also more focussed on what inspires them to do what they do; how they translate their values into their work and why they continue to have hope.

– Tanya Kim Grassley and Ajay Rastogi

Chapter 1
On Activism

The essence of Gandhi's teachings can be encapsulated as 'Be the change you want to see'. In a world filled with so many words and good intentions, direct action is what brings our values to life.

Although some progress has been made, the tide has yet to turn in favour of genuine sustainable development, and the destruction and degradation of the planet continues at an even faster pace. But something new is emerging. Young activists are doing all they can to drive urgent political action. Organisations are starting to recognise that they need to play a part in tackling the global climate emergency.

Someone who has dedicated his life to peaceful environmental activism is Satish Kumar. In his early twenties, inspired by Gandhi and the British peace activist Bertrand Russell, Satish embarked on an 8,000-mile peace-pilgrimage together with his friend EP Menon. They walked from New Delhi to Moscow, Paris, London and Washington DC,

without any money, to deliver a humble packet of 'peace tea' to the then leaders of the world's four nuclear powers.

The core Gandhian idea remains; 'Swaraj' or 'true freedom' is attainable through sustainable management of local natural and cultural resources, with equitable access and respect for human needs through self-governance. The Gandhian view provides a holistic vision where ecology focuses on the high integration of human resources and skills in developing local economies to and rejuvenative agriculture; systems that promote human health, protect biodiversity and help minimise global carbon emissions.

These principles have been elaborated upon in a book, *Small is Beautiful*, published by Schumacher College, which illustrates how the concepts of 'small, local, appropriate and just' can be principles for action in various sectors of the economy.

Satish's belief in personal transformation as the precursor to change is embodied by activists Marijn van de Geer and Siti Kasim.

Marijn van de Geer is deeply involved in the growing Extinction Rebellion movement, which uses Gandhi's principles of civil disobedience to draw attention to the fact that the time left for taking action is running out. Climate crisis and biodiversity collapse must be addressed through radical change in the next few years to protect the very foundations of human survival. Marijn describes the epic 10-day demonstration across London, in April 2019, which preceded the UK parliament declaring a climate emergency.

We end the chapter with Siti Kasim, who is well known in the Malaysian peninsula as a passionate, progressive and outspoken writer, lawyer and human rights activist. Siti spends every waking hour fighting for the rights of marginalised people, including the indigenous Orang Asli, supporting their fight for survival amidst ongoing deforestation and systemic oppression.

1.

We underestimate ourselves.
We confuse self with ego.

2.

Human nature that is sufficiently mature cannot help but identify with all living beings.

3.

Nature and our immediate environment have been largely left out of definitions of the self.

4.

The meaning of life, and the joy we can experience in being alive, is enhanced by self-realisation.

5.

We inescapably identify with others. Our self-realisation is enhanced by the self-realisation of others.

6.

It is possible to act *beautifully,* and in harmony with nature rather than just morally.

7.

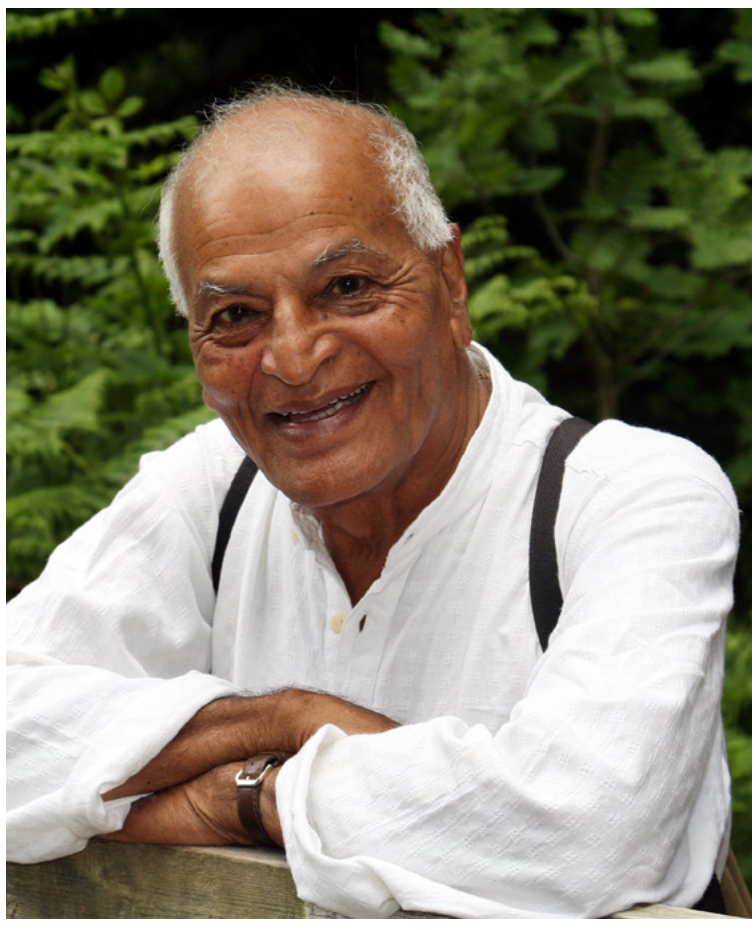
The greatest challenge we face today is mass ecological devastation, which threatens the existence of all living things.

Satish Kumar

The power of practice

Words have power only when they are practised. Otherwise, words have no power. You can say 'love', but it has no power until you love someone. 'Compassion' is only a word. Unless you put 'compassion' into practice, it has no power.

Power comes with practice; not 'why' but 'how' – how we implement it. The way is always from seed to tree, from small to large. Start small, start wherever you are. The journey of a thousand miles starts with the first step. So start wherever you are, and through your authenticity, your integrity and your commitment, you will influence others.



Satish Kumar.
Photo by Geoff Dalglish.

Don't worry about how you influence others. You will influence others. There's no way you cannot influence others, if you be the example and start, and do the things that you want to do in your life. Others will see it and follow you! This is how all big change has happened. Nelson Mandela, Martin Luther King, Mahatma Gandhi, Mother Teresa – all these are great people who have done.

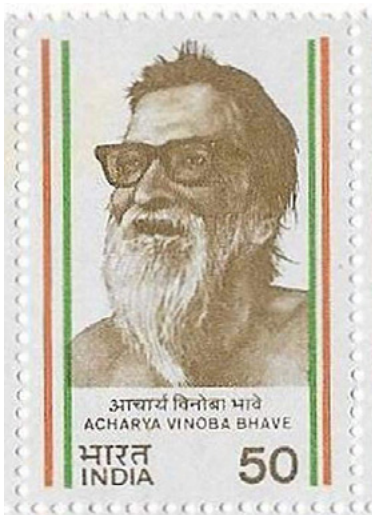
Just start.

Don't wait for money!

I could have had money. I did not go without money because I did not have money. I went without money because I did not *want* to have money. And I said: 'Money will not be a

help', because when I'm walking for peace, I want to show that peace comes from trust.

If I go to Pakistan as an Indian, I meet a Pakistani. If I go as a Hindu, I meet a Muslim, or a Christian, but if I trust them and go as a human being, I meet them as human beings. And with that, I trust. So if you have money, then you go and stay in a hotel, or a B&B. You eat in a restaurant, buy your own things. You don't need to trust anybody. You don't need anybody, but if you don't have money then you need people to help you. What is more important? People or money?



Vinoba Bhave stamps. As an advocate of non-violence and human rights, Vinoba Bhave is considered the spiritual successor to Mohandas Gandhi.

If you have money but no people you cannot build a movement. But if you have people... then...

Money is only a means to an end. Money is not the answer. If you have no money, that's a blessing. If you have no money, you can make friendships, you can work with people. Give service to people. They will help you. They will support you. Money may make things easy, but money does not make things authentic. People offered me money, when I was starting to walk. But my teacher Vinoba Bhave, he said that I should go without money. He was a great teacher. Vinoba had no money. He practiced *Kanchan Mukti*, money-free living. So if people say: 'I have no money', I say 'You are blessed!"

Communal living

People have millions and billions of dollars and pounds, but what good does it do? Why does every single individual have to own their own house? I think we have to go back to living more frugally and living with families and other people. When you live with a family you have be more tolerant. You have to be more accepting. You have to be more kind. You have to be more compassionate. You have to be humbler, because your parents will say something, your brothers will say something, your sister will say something. 'Why are you not doing this like this?' So you have to be humble. Living as a family is the way forward.

I think in the West we have too many houses – underused, big houses. One or two people living in four-bedroom houses. And then we take on a mortgage, because we want to be an individual, we want to be isolated. We are separate. We want to be on our own. Humility is lacking here. We can live in a community, and share. Absolutely! Share!

If you do what you need to do, money will come. I'm not saying I'm against money. Money is a useful invention. Money is useful as a means of exchange and so on. That's OK. But money is only a means to an end. A tool.

We have to always ask, "What is my goal?" I always have to ask myself this question. Everybody has to ask themselves, "What am I living for?" I'm not living for money. I'm

looking for something else, something to do with 'altruism' – something higher and greater. And if I live for that, people may give me money.

I didn't have any money for two and half years. People gave me food, people gave me clothes, people gave me shoes; people even gave me a boat ticket from the UK to America.

There is no shortage of money in the world. There is a shortage of imagination, a shortage of altruism, a shortage of action. So don't worry, the money will come. Money will follow you like your shadow follows you. That's what happens.

You aren't the shadow. The shadow is yours. So money is a useful thing, but don't work for money. Don't live for money. Money will be added when you do something bigger and greater, and more wonderful and more imaginative.

**"Money is only a means to an end.
Money is not the answer.
If you have no money, that's a blessing.
If you have no money, you can make
friendships, you can work with people.
Give service to people. They will help you.
They will support you."**

The fundamentals

There is a very good, classical model for traditional economics. When you study economics, the first system you study is a very good system. They say that you need three things for the economy. First, land or nature. That's a first. If you have no land, no forests, you can't live. Then second is labour; land, labour and then capital.

So second is labour. Labour means people. People are the true capital. Their imagination, their skills; people can build a house. They can make furniture. Nature is capital, people are capital, then money comes last. Money facilitates, money is good at the third level, as a tool, but if you put money at the top and put people and nature at the service of money and capital, then all the economics are skewed.

So what you need is nature capital first. Human capital second, because humans are a part of nature. We are made of earth, air, fire, water and basic elements. Human skills, community, cooperation. Imagination and skills. Making things. Building a house. Building furniture. We've lost that. And this is why we have become slaves to money.

I have two hands. This is the source of my income. My two hands can build a house, my two hands can grow food. I can eat. My two hands can make a jacket I can wear. My two hands can make a pair of shoes I can wear. My two hands are the real money.

And so money – working for money – is a guarantee of enslavement. You'll become

a slave because you're working for money. Money comes only third. Land, labour, capital. At the moment we have put capital at the top, and humans are the servants of capital, and nature is the servant of capital.

Elegant simplicity and equity

Equity requires social justice doesn't it? And so we have to work to create equity and social justice, so that everybody can live well. I call it e*legant simplicity*. Because if you live in elegant simplicity, that's a prerequisite for sustainability. At the moment we make so much stuff and clutter our houses, and our hotels, and our buildings and so on.

Stuff. It all comes from nature. We are turning nature into stuff, into clutter.

And so for sustainability, simplicity is a prerequisite. For spirituality, for being contented and happy, we only need a few things. If you want lots of things, then you have to work hard, to make money to buy them. It's all time wasted on external things.

For your inner peace, you need a few things, you need good things; good food, good clothes, good furniture good something, but at a minimum. Minimalism, basics. Enough is enough. Then it's spiritual and it's about equity and social justice. If a few people have too much, others have too little. So without equity, without social justice, the economy is no good. The economy must be accompanied with equity.

Elegant simplicity means less stuff, less clutter; production not for profit, but for need. The only purpose for production should be to meet the real, genuine need. I like the word equity, rather than equality. Equity means we all have a stake in the economy. We all have a stake in our lives. We all share. We each have five fingers, but they are not equal. Some are small. They still work together.

So the hand has equity. They all have their share. They all have their function. They all support each other. Cooperate, collaborate, work together to hold things. If I want to hold a glass, it won't if all my fingers are the same!

I would say the word 'equity' is a more appropriate word, and if you had equity, than equality would be an automatic prerequisite. More or less everybody would meet their needs. Some could eat more, some could eat a bit less, it wouldn't matter, we would all have what we need. Some people could have a slightly bigger body, some could have a smaller body, it wouldn't matter, as long as everybody felt a part of it.

When equity is there, everybody feels: 'I am part of this'. So even a small child is a part of the family. Even an old person, they have equity in the family. So I prefer the word equity to equality. Equality is good. But equality is not as idealistic as equity. Equity takes into account individual needs. Equal rights. Yes. Everybody has dignity. Everybody is equally respected. No ownership, just relationship.

The dignity of physical work

Recently I was coming to London and I was at the train station and there was somebody

cleaning and sweeping the floor and keeping the station very neat and beautiful. And I went to him and I said, "Thank you for cleaning our station. Without you keeping this in such a nice way we wouldn't be so happy, there would be clutter and dirt and dust and so on. Thank you very much", I said this to this person, and he was surprised.

"Nobody has ever thanked me like that before.
Thank you. I'm glad you noticed that I'm cleaning."

People don't thank people who are cleaning our stations, but without them cleaning, our stations would be so awful. So they are as important as the station master, or the person who sells you the ticket, or the person who is driving the train, or the person who is managing the train. If the cleaner wasn't there, the station would not function or be as pleasant.

If you have proper craftsmanship and if you make a tool, say by hand, as a craftsman, a machine can never make that tool as beautifully or as perfectly as human hands can make it. So let's promote craftsmanship and interdependence together.

Don't be a consumer, be a maker. A human being is not a consumer. We are all makers; we can all make something. The moment you say you are a consumer, you are putting down the dignity of humanity.

I'm not a consumer. I refuse to be called a consumer. I'm a maker. I make something. I make books. I make a garden. I make a kitchen. I make good food, I make things. I'm a maker. And when I've made something, I eat it. When I grow food, I eat it. I make clothes, I wear them. Consuming is a by-product of living. You are not a consumer. Don't be a consumer, be a maker, and you can learn to be a maker. You've got two hands. Your hands are a miracle.

At university, students are told that the only way to progress is industrialisation, urbanisation, consumerism, continuous economic growth – all these paradigms – and they are being brainwashed for years. Day after day after day.

I think Ajay's three principles of *Dignity of Labour, Interdependence and Interconnectivity* are fundamental. Now the corporations and corporate world are becoming aware of the issues, and that's a good opening.

"Don't be a consumer, be a maker. A human being is not a consumer. We are all makers; we can all make something."

Sweden is a good place to start. Because it was in Stockholm where the first environment conference took place in 1972. I was there, the first UN conference on the environment, and that's where the limits to growth Blueprint for Survival was set; many, many things were launched there. I spoke there at that forum; I was invited by the government of Sweden.

So even back in 1972, Sweden was avant-garde. That's amazing. As I said, Sweden has a lot of awareness, and lots of people are doing very good work there. It's one of the pioneer countries.

Be the change, organise the change, communicate the change

First of all, I want to congratulate all those activists on the front line. You are the champions and the leaders of today and tomorrow. What you are doing is courageous; you are not being self-centred, but you are doing something for planet Earth and for the whole of humanity.

If we do not take a new direction of sustainability, and resilience, then our future is in jeopardy. And therefore, I want to congratulate you and say that what you are doing is absolutely wonderful. It is on the lines of Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela and Wangari Maathai – many, many great women and men have taken such courageous paths to stand up for their values and speak truth to power. And that is what you are doing. And so I want to support you wholeheartedly.

"I want to congratulate all those activists on the front line. You are the champions and the leaders of today and tomorrow. What you are doing is courageous; you are not being self-centred, but doing something for planet Earth and for the whole of humanity."

And what I always say is that there are three steps towards transformation and change. The first step is be the change that you want to see in the world. The second step is communicate the change, through poetry, through writing, through books, through plays, through theatre, through music, through demonstrating, through whatever you are doing. Communicate so that other people become aware of it, and then organise the change. It's very important for people to be the change, then communicate the change and then organise the change.

And that's in a way what many, many marches and many, many demonstrations are doing. So that's wonderful. So be the change. Communicate the change effectively and organise the change. Then change will come. Change is coming. Transformation is on its way. And we will be there.

Marijn van de Geer

My name's Marijn van De Geer and I live in London. I am the co-founder of Resolution: Possible, which is a research company. And I'm also an active member of the political circle of Extinction Rebellion (XR); I'm one of the coordinators for the citizens assembly working group.

On the right, Marijn van de Geer at the London Rebellion, April 2019.

The London Rebellion, April 2019
I think it's exceeded our wildest expectations. We didn't think we would be on the streets for nearly two weeks. The movement has been growing ever since it started back in October 2018.

"This is an incredible moment. I'll try and describe it to you the best I can but... People from Land's End, Truro, Stroud, Swansea, Reading... I'm sure I'm leaving loads out. It's just kind of coming together. I'm now being welcomed by XR London in Hyde Park. All of XR is coming together in Hyde Park this afternoon; it's amazing!"

We got quite a lot of media attention for blocking five bridges. We also had a lot of new people joining us. We were blocking roads and causing disruption. I genuinely believe that a lot of people didn't quite get the severity of the climate and ecological crisis.

We got more media coverage, and what we're all about and what we want became better known. People really started looking into it, accessing the science.

The vast majority of people who joined us after November, said to us, "We had no idea how bad it was. We had no idea that we we're talking in terms of climate breakdown and ecological collapse within our own lifetimes."

It's not something that will happen in 100 years, it's something that's going to be happening within the next decade. As soon as they realise that, people think, "Right, OK. Yes, disruption seems extreme, and civil disobedience. But actually, what we're facing is extreme too." The means are justified.

So since November, Extinction Rebellion has just grown so much; people have joined us and approached Extinction Rebellion and either said, "Yes, we'll come and take part in actions" or they have wanted to be more deeply involved and said, "We want to join working groups."

We give people training in non-violent direct action, so they learn to de-escalate potentially aggressive situations, because we're so focussed on being a non-violent movement. It gives people the skills, because it's a tense situation when you're sitting there on the street and there's dozens of police officers around you, telling you to go away.

Generally, the police in the UK, or in London anyway, have been incredible. But it's still very intimidating and quite scary. There's a lot of chanting and singing and laughter, so it all becomes quite surreal, really. But to then have this training and to know "these are the things to say and this is how to react peacefully" – having that training is just so important.

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The Extinction Rebellion movement has been growing internationally ever since it started back in October 2018.

Extinction Rebellion Trainer:

“So many, many, difficult situations will be eased by fun and music and singing and those kinds of things. We can do those kinds of things to ease a lot of tension. But if that doesn’t work, the first thing you can do, is you can put your hand up and fall silent. The people around follow suit.”

“Okay. There’s another one you can do. Clap once if you can hear me! Clap twice if you can hear me. Clap three times if you can’t hear me!”

(Laughter)

“Okay, so we’re all familiar with that. So that’s to establish silence. That will already create a different kind of a vibe.”

Movements engaging a threshold of 3.5 percent of the population have never failed to bring about change.

“If that isn’t enough the next thing you can do is sit down. So you’re sitting down, and let’s pretend I’m the aggressor facing you guys, sitting down. That already creates a situation where my violence, if I was a violent person, will be exposed by having all these people sitting down around me.”

"If that doesn't work, the next stage after that is to start chanting! The chant that I'm recommending goes like this:

"We're non-violent. How about you?"

(Laughter)

"Okay. So, do you want to try that?"

Someone in the crowd: **"Now, don't you think that's a bit on the aggressive side?"**

(Laughter)

Crowd chanting: "We're non-violent. How about you?"

"We're non-violent. How about you?
We're non-violent. How about you?"

Organising peaceful protest

Everybody in the movement has to have the non-violent civil disobedience training, but then if you also decide to sign up as what we call an 'arrestable', you also have the arrestee training. That is, if you've put yourself forward and said, "I'm willing to do disruption until I get to the point where I will be arrested". The training tells you everything; what your rights are, what the procedure will be when you get taken into custody, what to expect.

Behind the scenes of Extinction Rebellion, it is truly remarkable. There are just all these incredible volunteers who are keeping track of where all the 'arrestables' are being taken, which police stations. There are legal observers at every action. They have the bright orange bibs on, and they take down the names of the people getting arrested.

They also take down the names of the arresting officers, and then they have a rota to go to all the police stations. As you can imagine, in April we had over 1000 people arrested. So it was a big project ensuring there were always people waiting for the 'arrestables', when they came out of the police stations.

It's quite intimidating being arrested. At the beginning you're always with your arresting officer. I was really lucky that I had a really nice officer. But then you're put in a cell by yourself for many hours.

You do kind of need that little bit of tender, loving care afterwards, because it's very disorientating; you have no idea what time it is and it's all very confusing.

An international movement

It was really something that was happening all over the world, not just in London. All over the world, people were doing actions in the name of their own Extinction Rebellion groups. It was hugely inspiring, knowing that while we were sitting on the streets in central London, people were doing exactly the same thing all over the world.

It has to be like that, because we're talking about climate change and environmental breakdown, so we can't just have one country committing and everybody else carrying on as usual. It has to be a global effort.

The ideas: so we had the pink boat on Oxford Circus, and we had the garden bridge at Waterloo Bridge. We have these incredibly creative ideas and also the logistics of the camps. So Marble Arch was our main camp, and there was a reception area, there was a regenerative culture tent, where there was yoga every morning. And we had this incredible cooking crew on every site. Throughout the time we were occupying the streets, we had new recruits coming to us all the time and at least three new rebel inductions per day for nearly two weeks.

When it all comes together, it's just amazing. Even when in the end the police took the pink boat away, someone immediately created this massive sign saying, "We are the boat", because having something big and symbolic removed from the site was quite sad!

"It was hugely inspiring, knowing that while we were sitting on the streets in central London, people were doing exactly the same thing all over the world."

People from all walks of life

It was so amazing with people from all walks of life coming together. The sense of community was amazing. There were people from all over the UK, from all sorts of backgrounds.

We actually had taxi drivers joining us in the end, they said: "Well, I have children too. And something does need to change, and I can't just say now I'm going to do something as an individual. I need the support of the government to help us navigate through this crisis."

There were farmers from all over the country, young inner-city people. It was a huge mix, especially amongst the young. I think they were just so diverse. Then you had people well into their 80s who were camping out. It's just incredibly humbling to see people who are your grandmother's age sitting on the bridge at Waterloo, and they said: "Well we'll actually be the first ones to be arrested, because we don't want these young

people to have criminal records, and for it to impact their potential future working lives." They were like: "Arrest us, the old people, we're happy to take this on".

They sat in front of all these young people and took responsibility for getting arrested first. It was incredible.

And then the first thing the media say is, "Why are you just privileged white middle class people?" What can you do? I think we all learned to shrug at the media and the weird stuff they came out with.

Extinction Rebellion Sticker. London, 2019. A British barrister, Polly Higgins, led a decade-long campaign for 'ecocide' to be recognised as a crime against humanity.

"The sense of community there was amazing. There were people from all over the U.K from all sorts of backgrounds."

Feeding the Rebellion

We initially started buying a lot of food, because we'd managed to raise quite a lot of money to be able to buy supplies in bulk to supply to the kitchens in the various sites. But we also started getting donations from food companies.

There's a company called *Riverford.* They're based in Devon and they supplied us with loads of fresh fruit and veg, feeding the Rebellion. A lot of amazing people stepped forward to help. Everyone was provided for. It was a moment in history. Just now obviously it's early days. I hope it will prove to be a positive moment in history, certainly.

Pressure on the government

So it was very exciting when the UK parliament declared a climate emergency a few days ago, but obviously now we're watching to see what that will actually entail.

We want the creation of a Citizens' Assembly to navigate through what the climate emergency is going to entail on a practical level. What change the climate crisis is going to bring to all of our lives here in the UK.

It's one thing declaring an emergency, and obviously that's one of our demands, and it's hugely important that parliament has taken this seriously and that they're talking about it and that an emergency has been declared, but it doesn't have any 'teeth' yet, so to speak. It doesn't mean anything yet. And that's what we need to focus on now.

Meeting the Environment Secretary, Michael Gove, last week – he talked us through all the things that the government had already done. I thought, what a waste of time. Why are you telling me this? We already know this. Stop telling us how amazing you think you are. I can't believe that in 2019, this is how government functions.

"Now! Now! Now!"

"No more waiting!"

"No hesitating!"

"We need to build a revolution

And we need to start right now!"

The only thing I am hopeful for is that we get deliberative democracy to supplement the current system. I think it's the only way forward. The aim is that we will have a national citizens' assembly on climate emergency.

We need to have UK-wide policies with teeth that can address the corporations. The government needs the mandate and the strength to say no to. No fracking, no to the Heathrow airport expansion, no to this, no to that. Those things have to come on a national level, or even on an international level. There needs to be systematic, systemic change, so it's not just out of the goodness of the individual's heart that change needs to happen. We need to hold governments and corporations to account as well.

The clock is ticking.

Siti Kasim

My name is Siti Kasim. I'm a lawyer by profession, in Malaysia, in Kuala Lumpur. You see, I used to do a lot of human rights cases; children's rights, refugees, but then I realised that I can't be saving the world. I must focus on one or two issues.

So now I work with the indigenous people in the peninsula of Malaysia. I can share my knowledge about the law with the Orang Asli community. I go into the interior a lot, into the jungle, to the villagers and to their settlements, and I tell them that they do have rights, and that they shouldn't be afraid to stand up and take up those rights. I don't charge for this kind of thing.

Of course, they have their own activists as well. The Orang Asli activists. They are the eco warriors, indigenous people. They are at the frontline of nature conservation. We should recognise that. The way they preserve the balance of the ecosystem is through the way they live.

Siti Kasim in front of Nordic flags.

An innate respect for nature

For example, the Orang Asli have their '*pantang*' – meaning that they can do certain things in their culture. It's been that way for generations. But there is a reason for it. It is actually to preserve the balance of the ecosystem.

So these are their rules. The Tamaya tribe, for example, they told me that they will never touch the tiger because to them the tiger is very powerful; powerful in the sense of spirit-wise. They revere the tiger very much.

Of course, nowadays the settlements are built by the government. But in the old days, they would plant their rice and everything they needed for their own sustenance. And after a while they would shift. Rotating. That's the word. They would rotate where

they got their resources from and so that is how they would preserve the land! People don't understand that their way of life is beneficial to the Earth.

Generally, Malaysian people support us helping our indigenous peoples, but when it comes to religion, they become much more possessive. They don't like the truth. People hate to hear the truth. With me nothing is too sensitive! We must still keep on pushing the boundaries. Otherwise we're never going to improve. That's what I believe anyway.

I mean 'human rights' is something that is not 'given'. It's something we are born with. We are born with rights as a human being. We are all entitled to basic human rights.

"They are the eco warriors, indigenous people. They are at the frontline of nature conservation. We should recognise that. The way they preserve the balance of the ecosystem is through the way they live."

Siti Kasim visiting people from the Temiar tribe in their village, Kampong Bering Lama (Old Bering Village), in Kelantan, Malaysia.

On identity

Malaysia is unique. We have so many cultures, so many races and we all have different ways. I don't really care about what people say online because I know myself. I know I have many supporters. I know I have very, very good people around me. I think I'm blessed with a strong constitution. I'm very confident about who I am, and what I am.

I think we women evolve better than men! I notice that now I am 55, coming up to 56 years old, I feel that the more religious a person is, the more closed their minds are. They limit their minds to the barriers that build up or the walls that they build up for themselves based on their faith or their beliefs. I just think that religion should not be imposed on anyone.

“Once the Orang Asli convert to Islam or Christianity they lose their identity. They also lose their legal recognition as indigenous people. And this has been used by the government before.”

The indigenous people in Malaysia don’t have a religion. But of course, there are people that go into the interior where a majority of them live, trying to spread their faith. There are Christian and the Muslim missionaries who convert indigenous communities. They go into the jungle where the Orang Asli reside and then they try to get as many as possible of the indigenous people to convert to either Christianity or Islam.

The problem in Malaysia is that the law determines who is recognised as an indigenous person. You are only officially an Orang Asli, an indigenous person, if one of your parents is Orang Asli and if you are *practicing* your culture, and you speak the language of your tribe.

Siti Kasim chats to a Temiar elder.

“The majority of people don’t value indigenous people. People don’t understand their culture. There is no way we should expect them to live like we do.”

If you are missing out on one of these three criteria, you’re no longer seen as an Orang Asli in the eyes of the law! It is the same for Malays. Once you’re a Malay, you’re automatically a Muslim. It doesn’t matter whether you believe it or not. It’s the law. Once the Orang Asli convert to Islam or Christianity, they lose their identity and their legal rights; they are being taught not to practise a certain aspect of their culture, because it isn’t accepted in their new faith. They also lose their legal recognition as indigenous people. And this has been used by the government before.

When we take matters to court on behalf of the Orang Asli, *pro bono* of course, the government lawyers become smarter and smarter. They question us! “Are these litigants really Orang Asli?” It is really crazy!

Memories and expectations

If you go and see the Orang Asli in the interior and you meet the older generation, those who knew the British during their governance, they only have good things to say about the British.

The older Orang Asli always say that the British looked after them very well. Their health was taken care of and in fact right up to today, if you’re white and you go into the interior, they look highly on white people because they still have these memories of how the British treated them.

They always said that the British treated them better than the government of Malaysia. They probably felt they were much more better off because in the old days their land wasn’t being taken for palm oil. They weren’t forced to move out from their villages. They weren’t forced to do anything they didn’t want to, and the British even gave them land rights.

With the new government, obviously I think that their intention is probably noble. They want to try and help to improve the life of the Orang Asli by bringing them out into society to live amongst others. They want to force them to integrate or assimilate into mainstream culture, and they want the Orang Asli to become Malays.

“Just take these people out of the jungle and help them.” This is what they think. What I see is that even now the majority of people don’t try at all to understand the psyche or value of the Orang Asli as Malaysia’s indigenous people. People don’t understand their culture. There is no way we should expect them to live like we do.

Why don’t they just ask them what they want? When you see them sleeping and resting, do you know how many days they have been out in the jungle to try and find

their sustenance? It's not easy. When you go into the jungle for just a couple of hours, you realise how hard it is. When they go into the jungle, they go for a couple of days. Could you do that as a city person?

Siti Kasim with Temiar women outside the court in Kelantan. Siti was representing them in a land dispute.

Deforestation for palm oil

To be honest I would say 99.9% of the logging and deforestation in Malaysia is all legal. It is all legal! Can you imagine? This is the problem. People think there is a lot of illegal logging in Malaysia. No, no, it's not even illegal. All they do is pay to get a licence from the state government. These companies get the licence from our forestry department. They are supported by our politicians and the local state governments. This is where the problem lies, because there's a lot of corruption going on.

The companies and politicians don't care about the wellbeing of the forest. They don't understand that the forest is related to us, to the people living in towns too. They simply cannot relate to that. One minister in the previous government actually said that he considers palm oil plantations to be forests. And he's a minister! He must find out what the international world considers a forest to be!

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They say they planted the palm oil tree. So, it's a tree! It's really hard when people are making decisions without understanding the environment or the nature of our Orang Asli. They use poisonous things such as pesticides where the Orang Asli are living. They don't even understand that all these pesticides seep into the ground, and then go into the river that the Orang Asli use for drinking water.

A lot of the Orang Asli are forced to live in palm oil plantations. They have nowhere else to go. They have a lot of problems with disease and are generally not healthy if they live in or around the plantations. I know the current Malaysian government is pretty upset with the European Union, because the EU says they aren't going to buy any more palm oil from Malaysia. But I support the EU action. What palm oil is sustainable?

Of course, the Malaysian government is worried because they have to maintain the economy. But why doesn't the government actually ensure that at least no more forest will be cut down? Recently, the government is allowing durian fruit to be grown, because durian now has a higher value than palm oil. Some state governments allow these companies to plant durian in the middle of
the jungle.

This is the fight that we have with the Kelantan government right now. They have given this company, M7, 10,000 hectares to plant more durian trees, and this comes at the expense of the Orang Asli. They have already trampled on Orang Asli graveyards. They encroach on their grounds. But the company is quite rich. It does everything it can to avoid abiding by existing rules and the demands made by NGOs and the public.

The problem is that we have a federal government, and then we have the state governments. And the federal government cannot decide on land. Only the state government can decide on this. So when it comes to issues of land, the real power resides within the state government. The federal government cannot tell the state of Kelantan: 'Protect this land for the indigenous people and do not destroy it.' The land where the Orang Asli live is financially too valuable. A few people are profiting at the expense of the planet and the majority of the people.

Setting a precedent

This government is trying to do something to help, and I'm very proud of this. It is a first when it comes to legal action taken by the federal governments against a local state government. They can sue the state government for taking the rights of the Orang Asli. So, this is the first case, perhaps in the whole world, where a federal government is suing a state government.

The Orang Asli come under federal law. You see, the federal government has the fiduciary duty to make sure that Orang Asli lives are not affected by

so-called modernisation. For many, many years the Orang Asli in Kelantan have been campaigning for their rights. Indigenous activists have tried to block commercial companies. They have been up against contractors, who have even attacked them with weapons. The contractors don't hesitate to try to scare the young Orang Asli people, but those young people persevere.

This is the first case where our federal government has sued the companies as well as the state government. This is the first case now. We're very excited about it. I can tell you that there are only a handful of lawyers working to help the Orang Asli. In all the years and all the legal cases in support of the rights of the Orang Asli, our governments have never, ever made a policy out of those cases. Yet, as you know, cases should set a precedent for laws.

This case has not actually started yet. Stalling methods are typical. There are a lot of other applications made by the companies and the state government, asking for a stay on this and a stay on that, and so they just delay matters. It's delaying tactics.

The Orang Asli in Malaysia

There used to be about 18 tribes in the peninsula of Malaysia. Some tribes have been totally wiped out. For example, we only have very few left of the Batek tribe. And also, the Jahai; these are the shyest people. During the big flood back in 2016, the big flood in Kelantan, I heard stories about some Jahai people who were living behind a Malay village or kampung. When the food aid arrived, it was just dropped off at the first Malay village. The food wasn't passed on to the Jahai village behind that. They were too shy to come forward. These Jahai people won't even come out and be seen, let alone take food aid. They won't fight. They will never argue with you. So now there are very few of them left. It's very sad.

I am worried for our indigenous people here in Malaysia. In the whole of Malaysia, the population is about 35 million. But for the indigenous Orang Asli people, in the peninsula, there are about 200 to 250,000. That's all. They are only a drop in the ocean. If we carry on like this, one day there will be no more Orang Asli in Malaysia.

In Sabah Sarawak there are many more. There are only a few tribes left there, but they consider themselves to be different. They prefer to be left on their own if they can.

I hope to see something happen. Otherwise we have to think about other ways to help these people. We must keep on fighting for what we believe in!

Chapter 2
On Survival

If humanity is to survive, we have to make significant changes to the systems that support us. This is also an opportunity to create new systems in which we can all flourish. Equity is just as much as part of this proposition as biodiversity protection and the reduction of climate emissions.

This chapter, On Survival, presents three strong voices each with positive visions about how society can move from survival mode to thriving in an inclusive and healthy manner.

First, culinary curator Monika Kucia explains how she takes the ego out of serving food. Monika hosts cultural food events and has been involved in starting a farmers' and producers' market in Warsaw where people get to meet the people behind the food they buy.

Monika Kucia talks about the importance of doing things physically. The future is sensual, she says, because this brings us back to a more local scale. She reminds us of the beauty of the biological rhythm, and that food and our identities are in constant change. In her view, when we take the ego out of food, the senses are awakened in a heartfelt connection with the self and others around us in the community.

Next, we hear from design leader and educator Daniel C. Wahl. Daniel's book *Designing Regenerative Cultures* is a must for anyone interested in transformative innovation.

With years of hands on experience in conservation as a marine biologist, Daniel has witnessed both the beauty and the destruction of our oceans. He explains how society needs to move far beyond current definitions of sustainability into concepts of regenerative and restorative transformation on a bioregional scale. The social, cultural and ecological impact of this paradigm offers many concrete case studies showing plausible ways to tackle the climate crisis.

Lastly, we hear from Helena Norberg-Hodge, author of *Ancient Futures*, a seminal work that compares the way of life in the Himalayan region of Ladakh before and after globalisation. Helena Norberg-Hodge is a pioneer of the new economy movement and known as a leading proponent of localisation or decentralisation – economics of personal, social and ecological wellbeing.

Helena's NGO, Local Futures, initiates wide-ranging programmes all over the world that address the economic root causes of today's crises, from unemployment to climate change, from depression and anxiety to loss of biodiversity.

Deep ecology, as defined by Arne Naess, offers a serious vision for systemic change.

For example,

1. **Humanity cannot survive without nature.**
We need to design all our systems and concepts around that notion. For example, our current economic model of perpetual growth is not viable – nor useful – for the dignity of mankind.

2. **Diversity is the essence of life.**
We need to cultivate biological and cultural diversity locally, as well as reducing carbon emissions globally. Every living being is an integral part of an ever changing ecosystem.

3. **Organisations must review their societal purpose.**
Organisations need to enable sustainable livelihoods. Our governments, corporations and other organisations need to declare a global climate emergency and mobilise together.

Monika Kucia

For Monika Kucia, food is life!
Photo by Kasia Idzkowska.

My name is Monika Kucia, and I'm a food writer and food curator. I design culinary events that are also artistic and have some social aspect.

Everything I do seems to be about food, but I find more and more, as I get older, that actually everything in life is connected, and even though food is the medium I use in my work, it's never only about food. It's always about connections and relationships. It's about art, it's about history, it's about family. And this is what really makes my heart beat faster; if I see I can bring together all of these aspects around a table, and around the experience of eating or cooking.

About the love of food

I think I was sort of born with this intuition. I started being interested in food when I was a teenager. And then when I started writing about food, about 20 years ago, I was fascinated that it's so different in every region, and also so very different in every personal story. You probably have a completely different story about food than I have. We can say that there is a food voice, as Dr. Annie Hauck-Lawson calls it. There is something you can express about yourself through food. This is what I started exploring about 13 years ago when I first published a book.

Food is like the sun and everything else is sort of moving around it. Food is sensual because it involves all of our senses, and also it connects people because it's about feeding, and feeding is the giving of energy. It's about flow, and how energy goes between people.

Everywhere I go, I meet food people, and I always connect with them instantly. They have a similar sensitivity or a similar approach to many things as I do. They are more open, maybe. So food is a big tool for making friends, for talking anthropology and also for having fun and enjoying yourself. It's everything all in one, you know!

I think that humanity, or as individual people, we went wrong somewhere, at some point. Probably in the 20th century, or even maybe before that, when the industrial revolution arrived. I essentially blame mass production, greed and indulgence.

Now, food can be more about pleasing myself than about feeding myself. And as we all know, pleasing myself is not always actually good for me, or good for other people or the planet. Because we have the means and a global system, we can get almost any type of food we want. And in the end, that's not necessarily a good thing. It destroys nature.

What I'm saying is that we went wrong and maybe there is no way back. But what we can do now is make personal choices that are wise and use our knowledge and awareness to stop the process of destroying our home, the Earth.

"Food is like the sun and everything else is sort of moving around it. It's about flow, and how energy goes between people."

Monika Kucia, with cheesemaker Tomasz Strubiński, of Kaszubska Koza, at the farmers' market in the Praskie Koneser Centre, Warsaw, Poland. Photo by Kasia Idzkowska.

Creating a farmers' and producers' market

We started doing the farmer's market in Warsaw in April 2019. We prepared it for a long time. The idea is to bring real food, and the real people who are making it, to the people who live in the inner city.

We have some markets with organic food in Warsaw, but we started our market in the Praskie Koneser Centre. There was nothing like it there. So we thought it was a good idea to give it a shot.

For me, what's really important is that a relationship is possible, that you can talk to the person who produces the food. It changes our attitude, and the way we're used to shopping. Nowadays, people are so used to just coming to the shelf and picking whatever they want. You are the king, the king of the supermarket!

But here in the market, there is a person who has touched all of these sausages or fish or vegetables or cheese, anything else we have there, with their own hands. It's personal. Shopping becomes personal.

In this situation, you get to know these people. It's more meaningful. It's very important to respect these people and to show them that respect, because they work very hard to give us very good quality healthy food.

I want to turn around the idea of shopping. It should be more about me coming to these people to get my food to feed my family, rather than me being the picky gourmet customer who just looks for the best product.

I think we should really support each other. We should really change our sense of proportion, in my opinion. The people in the villages feed us, so we should appreciate them and we should respect them.

Village life

We don't value food anymore because it has become so cheap and so easily obtainable. But we are facing the fact that this might change during our lifetimes. There is a strong possibility that just like that, food will not be so easily obtainable.

I had a grandmother who lived in a little village, and she worked really hard. Her home was like a small farm, and everything we needed came from this small farm. There was no waste. There was no rubbish! Nobody would ever take out any rubbish because there simply wasn't any.

Monika Kucia foraging for mushrooms with mushroom expert, Pål Karlsen, during the We Do festival in Oslo, Norway, 2019.

There was a shop in this village, and it was open twice a week for about four hours. There was no plastic, and I remember buying small things like notebooks for writing in. There wasn't much in this shop, they would produce everything for themselves and exchange things with their neighbours. But it was a very hard life. It was not fun. Waking up at 5 o'clock in the morning isn't something anyone would regard with a nostalgic sentimental vision of the village.

So what I'm saying is that I understand we've become so comfortable in the cities. But we city people need to remember — we are probably the only 2% of people on the planet who have access to goods from all over the world. And we don't even have to work with our hands nowadays as we have machines and resources and subsidies from the European Union. Things are very different.

The simple life on a small farm with two cows and one pig is hard. It's just a hard life. So we should appreciate and respect the people who still take the effort to actually make things with their own hands rather than eat mass-produced, artificial food which is becoming less and less like actual food. It becomes a product. It becomes a processed item that has no connection with where it comes from. Usually we don't even know what it comes from. We don't ask questions when we buy food in the

supermarket. We believe the marketing messages. I don't even know what's in a ready-made pizza. You don't really ask where the ingredients come from.

Monika Kucia at a foraging workshop at the We Do festival in Oslo, 2019.

Changing our mindset

Climate change. This is something I think most people don't really take seriously. This is us being lazy. And it will finally probably kill us if we keep going the way we are. Cooking some potatoes and a carrot – it really doesn't take that long. Cooking from scratch is part of life. This is more about our approach. People make choices and sometimes it's more important to do something else. I see that here in Poland – in the last five years, we've started seeing so much ready-made food; more than I've ever seen before. Yet we still have a huge interest in cooking and in food. We have culinary programmes, culinary books and all these culinary celebrities, yet there is more and more processed food. Cooking becomes a luxury. This is a big struggle for our farmers' market, I would say. Changing the attitude to time, and to food.

We need to convince people that it's better to come to the market and get to know these people and come every week; to buy your eggs straight from the farm, to buy your meat, if you eat meat, and to buy other things straight from the people who made them. But this takes an effort. And this effort is in your mind. But when you do this, it becomes part of how you see yourself, how you see your community and how you connect with your community.

I would never say food is the most important thing, because people can be extremely healthy and still destroy their relationships, destroy the planet, destroy different aspects of themselves, like emotionally or spiritually.

So what I'm saying is that food is just one of the factors.

I don't believe any one thing can be taken apart or separately from other things. Food is something that everybody needs every day. Of course, this is true, but if you

live in harmony – and I'm not saying I live in harmony, but I know some people who do, and they have this sense of proportion. They see a place for food, but they aren't 'crazy' about it.

We want our children to be healthy, so they should eat healthy food. But you know, when you don't respect yourself and don't have good intentions for yourself, you'll never understand why you need healthy food. Food is about the relationships you have. It's about the family you create, and the friendships.

"Food is actually a part of mindfulness, I would say, as much as anything else. Like sleeping, or loving – food just reflects our attitude towards ourselves, towards the planet and towards other people."

If you mean well for yourself and for others, if you're an openhearted person, then you want to eat the food that really nourishes you and is good for you. And you're aware of all these aspects because you try to be aware.

So food is actually a part of mindfulness as much as anything else. Food just reflects our attitude towards ourselves, towards the planet and towards other people.

The same is true about clothes – about making clothes, buying new clothes or new shoes.

If we realised how much effort and pain and struggle there is behind this food or the clothes or other goods we buy, if we realise how cruel these businesses are, then we would probably make really different choices. It's not just about the white Western world. It's more about economic power, everywhere.

This is why if you want to be fair, it's better to buy locally, because then you know where it comes from. You can say that you try to make honest choices. Otherwise you never know.

The local way of life

I keep coming back to the idea of community. For example, I'm in this Facebook group with people in my neighbourhood. It's not neighbours in my building, but in the area where I live. I don't know them personally, but there's a lot of exchange going on there. There's a lot of borrowing, or swapping or donating; business without any money changing hands. I think this is the future.

Monika at a food festival in Poland, 2019.

We have different types of currency. Avocados or wine aren't currency, but they're something we all want. We can barter. But there is also the currency. This is something that's

informal. There's no bureaucracy. It is based on real needs. I lend you my bike because you need it, and I trust you, and I know that you'll give it back after two days. This is normal behaviour and it's nothing new. People have lived like this forever, because we depend on each other.

But what I'm saying is that with globalisation and then with these increasing problems with the environment that globalisation brings, the only solution is to get back to these roots, to something that is real and close to you and you can touch it. I believe the future is sensual. Getting to make stuff with our hands. Learning from each other. I believe this will be the only way we can rescue ourselves.

The ego and being part of real life

We'll probably never create a proper paradise here. But when I'm creating my events and the things I'm doing with food, around food and connected with culture and rituals and some traditions and history, I feel good. I see that people want to have something real. This is really what wakes them up.

It brings real value rather than just fun or entertainment. What I'm doing is getting people involved rather than presenting something to them. If you're part of something, you feel responsible for it, because it depends on you. It's up to you. You're a participant, not a consumer. And this is what I believe is also important in gastronomy, and this is why I work with the village women, and with homeless people, and with really unknown cooks.

When you have a famous chef and the creation of a special dish by this chef, you relate to the person or to the dish and you can get very touched, very emotional. But on the other hand, you have a chef who is famous and then you have a customer who also wants to be regarded as having a higher status because they are able to access this dish from this famous chef in this place, because they have money!

This is about ego. All of it. This isn't a simple exchange. It's more about status and spectacle. More like showing off.

What's more important and more interesting to explore is all these worlds of other people who are also engaged every day in food and feeding their families and their communities, in feeding other people. But they don't do it to show off. They barely get any recognition.

We're all makers and we're all capable of doing things. I also visit the small villages to listen to old people who are still singing the old songs, real folk music. I've been told that in the traditional singing, the songs are the most important thing; the song goes through the singer, from generation to generation. We are simply passing it along.

In the same way, the recipe of traditional food, spaghetti carbonara, Polish broth or pierogi or whatever; we are just transmitting it. We are the stewards, and this is about not being too humble, because you can be a great steward, but understanding that you don't own it, and that, like songs, food doesn't belong to anybody. It belongs to the

community and the singer has the privilege to sing it.

When there is less ego involved, you just enjoy the process because you're connected, and you're part of something bigger than you. I think this is what makes us feel really safe, as human beings. To feel that we're connected. This is what we all want, deep inside.

In the food area it's also important to remember that food is actually about feeding yourself and your family. You feed yourself, you feed your community in whatever way you can. You nourish them.

There is the word in Polish, *poshivina*, it means something like 'giving life' and it means food. And it's very important for me to remember this. I'm just serving. I'm serving something, but you respect me for serving this to you. There is no power game in it.

And this is how I try to create events.

Food and identity

I don't believe in a fixed nationality, like in the way that my identity is solid, because I'm the traveller and everybody's a traveller. If my life is a journey, then I'm changing all the time. I'm just an inhabitant of the Earth, at this moment.

Anything that is sort of solid and inflexible is like a monument, it's an ideal. It's never real. And if something is real, nobody can take it away from you. It's impossible.

We are flowing through history with whatever is happening. And we need to remember that the kitchen is something that never stops. It's always changing. It has always brought in influences from the outside. If we talk about 'traditional cuisine' to what point do we refer? What year? What period? It's like telling a fairy tale! Cuisine is constantly changing because people bring new things to it all the time, because we are omnivores, and we eat everything – including influences. There's no other thing that changes as fast as cuisine, as the food world. I'd rather say 'kitchen in Poland' than 'Polish cuisine'.

"There's no other thing that changes as fast as cuisine, as the food world. I'd rather say 'kitchen in Poland' than 'Polish cuisine'."

Nationalism? People are scared and they need to hang on to something, and they don't want to accept the fact that it's all about insecurity. And this insecurity is also about the ego.

The future of nature

Nature will win anyway. Nature doesn't need us. If you see what's happening in Chernobyl now, it's growing back. So nature will deal with this catastrophe when there are no more humans.

Maybe we are heading for disaster. I don't know. For now, it is only my intention that matters. So if I do the right thing as much as I can, I'm doing my best. It's about my heart.

It's not about anything else.

I'm not optimistic for humanity. It's about our systems. It's about the big money behind the things that are happening, that took us to the point we are now. This is about fossil fuels. This is about global politics. These systems are just making it more dangerous for the planet. The ego is the centre of it all – or the central problem is the ego.

Daniel Wahl

Daniel Wahl in Majorca, Spain. Daniel is an international consultant and educator specialising in biologically inspired whole systems design and transformative innovation.

My name is Daniel Wahl. I used to be a marine biologist. I got disheartened with reductionist science and its failure to include other ways of knowing into the way we do science, and I ended up doing a master's degree in Holistic Science at Schumacher College in the UK.

At that point, I realised the power of design in putting this new holistic world view of Gaia theory and Goethean and holistic science into action. Since then, I've been on this path of exploring how we can redesign the human presence and its impact on Earth within our lifetime, so we can actually have a future as a species, because we're currently facing the possibility of short term human extinction if we don't fundamentally change our ways.

Life is a planetary process. And we are part of that planetary process.

I work a lot now with regenerative design and regenerative development. In this context, 'sustainable' is really more about ways of doing things that don't add any more damage to the system. 'Restorative' and 'regenerative' go beyond that, to actually try to undo the damage we've done over so many decades and centuries of very unsustainable practices.

"Life is a planetary process. And we are part of that planetary process."

So, it's very much about finding solutions that come out of 'place.' It is also attuned to the idea that the place itself has a story it wants to tell, and that story includes human beings who have lived with it for generations. What is also central is that it's about enabling people who actually live in a place to respond to change as something that is inevitable. My belief is that design has a huge part in making that possible.

Global consensus

The process of the United Nations responding to climate change has been painfully slow. With the Paris agreement breakthrough, there has been some form of commitment among most nations to stay under the two-degree average global warming figure. But more recently the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has revised this and said it's necessary to actually stay below 1.5 degrees. The reality is we're not on track at all. We are on track to six, seven or eight degrees of warming, which would essentially mean the unravelling of ecosystems around the globe, and the end of civilisation as we know it.

In the most recent report, actually it was in November 2008, the IPCC gave the world 12 years to respond to this crisis. But I think that the IPCC has a tendency to be conservative, so they don't get criticised. In any case, 12 years was really too long a window of opportunity to give ourselves.

I think Antonio Guterres, the Secretary General of the UN, speaking in September 2018 was probably more on the mark when he said that if we don't respond within the next two or three years, in a way that's unprecedented in terms of international collaboration, we might have triggered runaway climate change to a point that even if we later decide to do something about it, it will be too late.

We don't even yet know half or more than half of the species that exist. Particularly the species in the soil, the microbes. We're just at the beginning of cataloguing them. And really that's where soil fertility starts – and with it, the foundations for higher life forms.

It's really a matter of us understanding that every single species does matter and has a role to play in creating this collaborative symbiotic system that is life as a planetary process. And we're part of it, and we're completely dependent on it.

The purpose of design

I strongly believe in the power of design. I think that ultimately, it's about using design as human intentionality expressed through interactions and relationships. It covers product design, but it also covers other more complex issues like monetary systems, transport systems, our whole economic system and even the way we do research in the different academic disciplines.

"The most powerful design intervention is the meta-design intervention of changing the stories we tell, about each other and in our relationship to nature."

There's a design decision at the beginning of each discipline. So essentially any act of human intention has a design element in it. In that sense, the most powerful design intervention is the meta-design intervention of changing people's world views and value systems, and the stories we tell about each other and in our relationship to nature.

When you shift that, our perceived and our real needs shift.

And with that, our intention shifts and everything downstream changes.

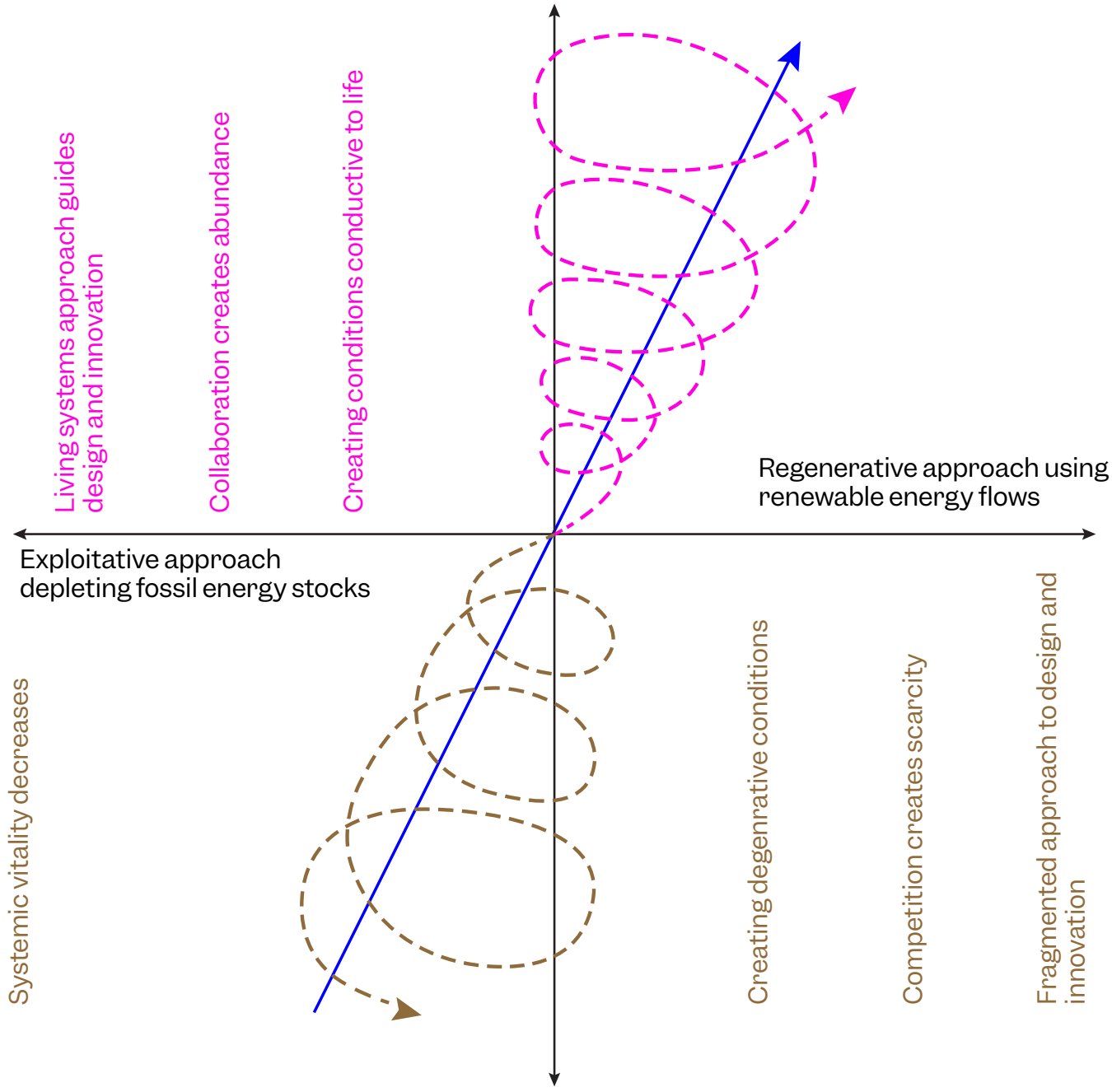
I think design is powerful, but most design schools still haven't actually woken up to how critical design, and deep ecological design thinking, could be to the survival of our species.

Recycling and upcycling

There are a lot of companies out there supplying things we don't really need, or they're supplying them in a way that is based on programmed obsolescence and a high turnover of products. And I don't think that kind of business practice has a future.

The regenerative design framework

Diagram of Regenerative Design Framework, taken from *Designing Regenerative Cultures* by Daniel Wahl, 2016.



Regenerative
Appropriate participation and design as nature

Reconciliatory
Reintegrating humans as integral parts of nature

Restorative
Humans doing things to replenish nature

Sustainable
Neutral point of not doing any more damage

Green
Some relative improvements

Conventional practice
Compliant to avoid legal action

I think we need to create far more durable products that are much more easily repairable at a local level. But we also need to create products that are, to some extent, recyclable; the components are more recyclable. If you go deeper, you realise that we're going to run out of most of the materials we make things out of, sooner or later.

All that thinking around the circular economy and the two loops in the circular economy diagram, with a cradle to cradle diagram, the industrial metabolism and the biological metabolism, they're really just concepts.

Ultimately, we're going to have to shrink the whole industrial metabolism because we won't be able to recycle most of the materials in that cycle forever.

One of the big oversells around this is this concept of upcycling. It doesn't actually work to upcycle things indefinitely, unless you have a free source of energy, and there's no such thing.

We really need to fundamentally shift our material culture towards more biomaterials that are regeneratively grown. Grown in the region, for the region, and based on the resources that that particular ecosystem has to offer. This has to be done in such a way that it doesn't destroy the rest of the ecosystem. On the contrary, it has to be done in a way that actively regenerates the ecosystem.

The baggage of economic growth

Basically, all companies are beholden to their shareholders. They operate within a system that is fundamentally exploitative and degenerative. That system is our current economic system.

The way we've designed money and the way money is created is based on winners and losers. We have differential interests on deposit and loans and we therefore create an uneven economic playing field based on zero-sum thinking. And while we have a system like that, we also have the necessity that a national economy must grow at a minimum of 3% per annum, otherwise it collapses.

There are a lot of top-level sustainability minded CEOs who really do care, and yet they are stuck in a system where most of what they do is like moving deck chairs on the Titanic.

Ultimately, we really need to consider that perhaps the assumption that these companies have to be around for another hundred years, just because they've been around for hundred years already, might be an erroneous one. Maybe some of these companies actually have to plan or design for their own death in ways that mean they can then re-emerge like a phoenix from the ashes; they can re-emerge as knowledge networks that help more regional production and regional consumption, with the innovation and development that they've been very good at.

A lot of people who are working in these companies are beginning to see that their children are not going to school on Fridays because they're claiming their right for a liveable future. They see London being disrupted by the Extinction Rebellion, and more

and more people getting more and more verbal about the fact that, metaphorically speaking, it's five past twelve. We don't even have a guarantee that we're still going to be able to make it even if we do things fundamentally different from now on.

Most people today are still stuck in the very early stages of realising how profound the changes are that we're now being called to make individually, as communities, as nations, and as one human family – while at the same time making sure their kids are at school, and that they can pay their bills so there's food on the table.

We are facing transformative change in a way that means these incremental innovations, and these incremental changes, just aren't going to make a difference in time. So hold onto your hat.

We have to relearn how to collaborate. To move from competitive advantage to collaborative advantage. And to realise that we're all in this together. Living Spaceship Earth is in danger of collapsing on us. We're living in a dream-nightmare, that tells the story that we are somehow separate from nature — that culture and nature are not one. This is one of the fundamental epistemological and ontological fallacies of our time.

"Perhaps some of these companies actually have to design their own death so they can re-emerge as knowledge networks that help more regional production and regional consumption."

Bioregional problem-solving

I'm increasingly thinking that working bioregionally is the scale at which we can make the biggest difference. Bioregionalism has been around since the late sixties, with this whole concept of re-habitation, or re-inhabiting our bioregions, and reconnecting to the biological cycles, the ecological cycles of those regions.

Bioregional thinking is increasingly affecting the conversation about what sustainable cities might look like. We have to understand that it is about a reconnection of the city back to its region. I could definitely see that there could be new examples of this developed in Sweden.

People have strong allegiances to their particular region. I think that's a great starting point, because one of the core things about regenerative development and creating regenerative cultures is that they are born out of the uniqueness – the biocultural uniqueness – of a place.

This makes regions more sensitive to both the ecological and biological uniqueness of the ecosystems they inhabit, but they are also sensitive to the historical and cultural dimension; how people have lived in relationship with nature, and with the elements and the climate, and with the patterns of that particular place.

I think it makes a lot of sense to rekindle regional identities, but not to do so in a sort of parochial 'Let's go back and pull up the drawbridges, and create lifeboats in a

turbulent world' kind of way, but rather by understanding that the region is the scale of action as part of a globally collaborative effort to heal the planet that we have raped and pillaged, and in doing so, possibly to heal ourselves, heal our relationships with each other, and heal the relationship between humanity and nature.

Daniel Wahl lecture, 2019.

Examples of hope

I know that in Costa Rica there's a movement to create a bioregional regenerative development case study in one part of the country. And actually, the whole country is looking at adopting regenerative development as its main development strategy. Things are shifting.

I also see that there's a confluence of movements in all walks of life, with people trying to transform business from within. In recent years, the Capital Institute has started initiatives to work with people in regions to create these 'regen' economic hubs at the bioregional scale.

Over the last four years, I've had the privilege of advising on an initiative of the Commonwealth Secretariat. This resulted in the creation of a new charity called Common Earth that is working on developing regenerative development road maps with and for the 53 member nations of the Commonwealth. Part of my work has been to connect this initiative with the work happening in Costa Rica, the work of the Capital Institute and Kate Raworth's work on regenerative *Doughnut Economics.*

This movement is growing, and the different players are not necessarily fully aware of each other. This is where part of my work comes in: to make the emerging new system more connected to itself and aware of itself; to make the ReGeneration rising visible and weave alliances and partnerships for collaborative advantage; to heal the Earth and her people, place by place, community by community, bioregion by bioregion.

I also think about the Planetary Health Alliance, which has a network of universities and research institutions around the world doing research and looking into the connections between planetary health ecosystems, health, population,

and individual health. This alliance also identified the bioregional scale as critically important for systemic interventions that aim for improved ecosystems and human population health, and individual health. I wrote my PhD on Design for Human and Planetary Health in 2006, long before that alliance was started.

We need to really understand the intrinsic value of our life and planetary health to the whole community of life.

There are also organisations like Commonland in the Netherlands, which has developed functional strategies to carry out large scale ecosystem restoration, working with local farmers and local landowners, in specific areas around the world, and transforming entire regions of between 500,000 and a million hectares in size — regeneration at the landscape scale.

The Ecosystems Restoration Camps Foundation started in 2016 has grown to more than 25 camp initiatives around the world already and we are entering the United Nations Decade for Ecosystems Restoration in 2021.

The momentum is building! I think the next two years are critical. I'm still hopeful that we're actually going to see transformative change become a global emergency response.

The Loess Plateau, also known as the Huangtu Plateau is a 640,000 km2 plateau located around the Wei River valley and the southern half of the Ordos Loop of the Yellow River in central China. Images thanks to John Liu and The Environmental Media Project.

It's only now that we're slowly beginning to link up the people who have pioneered work in sustainable cities and sustainable architecture, and in biomaterials construction methodologies and so forth, using new and pioneering approaches in biomaterials and product design, with all the wonderful work that is being done in Earth Care and Earth Healing or eco-therapy, from permaculture to agroforestry to analogue forestry and all these other techniques that have been around for a while and have improved over years and years of experimentation.

We also have lots of case studies to learn from if we choose to have a positive impact on the environment that we inhabit. There are plenty of places around the world where large scale regenerative agricultural projects have shown impressive results; the difference between these before and after views show what is possible in just 15 or 20 years.

I am thinking of the Loess Plateau example in China. In China, an area of hundreds of square kilometres has been transformed from arid eroding semi-desert to lush bioproductive terraces, with the springs coming back and the tree cover becoming permanent again, and essentially increasing the carbon content in the soil, drawing down carbon from the atmosphere, improving the bioproductivity of the area, improving the hydrology of the area, improving the amount of food that it generated and so on.

These things are possible, and there are examples all over the world. The way that life creates the conditions conducive to life is by continuously experimenting with novelty, and so things keep changing. Our planet sits within larger systems as well, which also affect how conditions on our planet change.

There is no destination sustainability. There is no destination Regenerative Culture. Instead, this is a continuous community-based process of learning how to adapt and how to respond creatively to change.

Working regeneratively means working in ways that we enable people to discover their own essence, their unique contribution to making the system more vibrant and more vital and more valuable. But at all levels of value, not just in economic terms.

We all have to walk that path. That is what life is all about. To be adaptive, resilient and regenerative — and to respond to change.

Helena Norberg-Hodge

I'm Helena Norberg-Hodge and I'm the director of *Local Futures*, an international charity. For almost forty years I've been promoting what I call 'decentralisation' or 'localisation'. And that's because I had the experience of working in cultures that had not been affected by the global market. Cultures like those in Bhutan and Ladakh, and later on, a lot of experience with places like Laos and many other parts of the world.

Helena Norberg-Hodge, 2019.

In the mid-seventies, Ladakh, or Little Tibet, was a part of the world that had not been colonised or developed in the modern era. In this high-altitude desert there were small villages that survived by irrigating the desert from glacial meltwater. There I found people who were still providing for all their basic needs from their own resources, producing a range of things; some vegetables, grain, they kept animals and had their own architectural tradition based on local materials; they still wove their own clothes from their own wool.

Eventually I travelled – actually walked – through the whole region, which is about the size of Austria. As I got to know the people, I found that they were the most relaxed, joyous and most vibrant people I had ever met.

I also saw that opening up the area to outside development was beginning to bring rapid change. So I ended up starting projects to demonstrate an alternative to conventional development, which among other things included demonstrating renewable energy as an alternative to fossil fuels.

I also had my eyes opened to the craziness in the global market. I saw this in a very short period after the area was opened up, having been sealed off for a long time. Butter that had travelled for more than a week over the high Himalayan mountains was suddenly coming in and being sold for half the price of butter that came from the farm next door.

This made me look at doing studies around the world, and I was invited to speak or start projects similar to the one in Ladakh elsewhere, including Bhutan. I went to parts of Africa, I was invited to Mongolia, to Myanmar, to Laos. Everywhere I went I would keep my eyes open for what was happening with the global market and what it was doing to local production and local producers.

I found the same pattern; in Mongolia, they had 20 million milk producing animals,

but in Ulan Bator most of the butter came from Germany. In Kenya, I found butter from the Netherlands costing half the price of local butter, and as I returned to Europe I found the same thing.

I became a passionate advocate of the need to strengthen local economies worldwide. Small producers – farmers, fishermen and forest workers who were producing a range of things from diverse, adapted species of animals and plants – were being replaced by bigger and bigger monocultures. They were being pushed off the land into bigger and bigger cities, and in those cities, there were fewer and fewer jobs. Traditionally in these cultures, there had been no such thing as unemployment.

Visitors at the Economics of Happiness Conference in Ladakh, 2019.

The huge impact of globalisation

People were driven off the land into larger and larger cities, all created through huge investments in fossil fuel-based infrastructure. You could see the beginnings of tensions between people who had lived side by side in more local, interdependent economies. They lived in peace when their communities were based on local resources that made people interdependent. Now suddenly they were dependent on anonymous institutions and bureaucracies. And there was this dreadful artificial scarcity of livelihoods – of jobs.

After only about a decade of opening up the local market and the local economy to outside development, these pressures led to violent conflict – to bloodshed – among people who had lived together peacefully for generations.

“People were driven off the land into larger and larger cities, all created through huge investments in fossil fuel-based infrastructure. You could see the beginnings of tensions between people who had lived side by side in more local, interdependent economies.”

“We have a system today that has been allowed to go so far that countries routinely import and export the same products.”

Most people have never experienced intact local economies. We have a history in which colonialism and slavery had already destroyed more diversified self-reliant local economies. Once you have destroyed the fabric of local interdependence and more diversified local production based on biodiversity, it’s very hard to see a clear path back towards localisation.

Global systems of food production and distribution

Most people are not looking at the global system. This is not about good guys and bad guys. At some level we all know that we depend on the living world, we all know that the real economy is the Earth. But there is very little clarity, I think, about the way we have lost sight of that.

Politically left and right in this regard is completely meaningless. Finding a way back to a genuinely sustainable way will require recognising, first of all, that food is the most important production and most important type of product that we have. It’s the only thing we produce that every person needs every day. The only thing.

To allow a system where governments are continuing to subsidise greater and greater distances between each individual and the source of their food is immoral; this inefficiency is responsible for the ecocide we’re currently witnessing.

We have a system today that has been allowed to go so far that countries routinely import and export the same products! The United States exports about a million tonnes of beef, then turns around and imports about a million tonnes of beef. The United Kingdom exports as much butter and milk as it imports. Right now, the UK is exporting 20 tonnes of bottled water to Australia, and Australia is exporting 20 tonnes of water to the UK.

On top of that, in this global food system we now have big business, basically condemned to roam the world for the cheapest labour, and that means they will fly fish from Norway to be deboned in China and then fly it back again. Apples have been flown from the UK to South Africa to be washed, then flown back again.

This is going on, on a massive and increasing scale, while we talk about climate change. At the same time the emissions from those planes and giant container ships that are shipping things back and forth are not even included when calculating national data for carbon emissions.

This is not about some evil corporation or about every CEO being evil, or that every government is completely self-interested. This is about blindness to the workings of an inefficient global system – a system that we’re simply not looking at. And it requires effort. We need to look at the trends from a global point of view, but look at them on the ground.

Conference in Bengaluru, Karnataka, India, 2019.

The diversity of life

Both people and nature are diverse. This is a fundamental principle of life. A fact. And we change from moment to moment. This is true of every plant, every animal and everything that lives. We must change the economy so that we don't destroy that uniqueness and that life.

What is wonderful is that from the grassroots, and very often through even individual initiatives, people have gained enough experience; there are a whole proliferation of positive initiatives that, when you analyse them from a structural point of view, you see they're about localisation. They're about reconnecting production and consumption and about adapting and respecting the limits and needs of the living world.

"This is not about some evil corporation. This is about blindness to the workings of an inefficient global system."

People care. Most people care, in every position. We want to do the right thing. Some of the newly emerging hubs for localisation – towns like Portland, Oregon – people are moving there because there's more human scale community interaction. People are known more for who they are, what they do and what they think – their values. So those are far more attractive places to live.

When we make changes to the food economy, we're making very fundamental, very important changes. The wonderful thing about localising is that there is a structural relationship between shorter distances between the market and the farm, so the local market – the market closest to the farm – not only accepts diversity but demands diversity. It can't use 20 tonnes of straight carrots. It's in the best interests of the smaller farmer – or even of a bigger one who decides to localise – to diversify in order to survive economically.

I know of examples of farmers in the USA who had been pressured to grow monocultures of tobacco and were near bankruptcy, barely able to survive, who would convert just a few acres of their land to a diverse range of vegetables to sell in the local market, and were then able to start getting back on their feet again.

If we look globally, we can see there is such an urgent need to restore diversified food sovereignty. To allow people and farmers to produce for themselves first and then keep some of their land or some of the effort for export, whether to tourists or to another market.

Trade has always been there. So this is not about ending trade. When we start really exposing what's going on and we understand our absolute need to reduce energy consumption wherever possible, but more importantly when need to restore biodiversity on the land, then a very different picture emerges.

We need to look at how taxes, subsidies and regulations are used to favour monopolies. No self-respecting capitalist would actually believe in subsidising monopolies, but that's what's going on.

Positive change in difficult times

You do feel that there is a shift going on. There is a waking up. It's almost like an intuitive reawakening to what's in our DNA. We evolved to be more connected to one another and to the living world. And you just see people coming out of the cities longing for that reconnection to the Earth and to community.

Community-building combined with a deep spiritual reconnection to nature is an amazing therapy. If we just opened our eyes, we would see a very, very, clear path to healing, at the deep psychological, personal and spiritual level, one that heals the Earth too. It's amazing how many people actually want to live a life of deeper connection and caring.

There are many ways that people are beginning to come together. One of them, of course, is local markets. There are also local business alliances. Perhaps starting a food co-op or creating a garden at their children's school. There is local financing in various forms, where when people understand about localisation, they start finding ways of creating, for instance, a revolving fund in their neighbourhood or with their local group.

There are new singing groups. One of things that held us together as communities in almost all traditional cultures was that we sang and dance and made music together. But with the industrialisation and commercialisation of our lives, we have become a spectator culture.

Localisation actually starts to help us rediscover many of the skills that we all already possess, and many of the strengths we have which have withered – which we don't experience when we lead our anonymous consumer lifestyles.

The most important thing we can do as individuals is to seek out like-minded

people near where we live, cook a meal together... and once we start opening our eyes to this, we already feel so much better. We already have greater faith in humanity. We realise the problem isn't humanity. The problem is the lack of human scale in an economic system that we simply have not been looking at.

Appropriate growth

This is about how the global population can start providing for its needs and enriching its local economy. I want to see growth. I want to see growth in healthy plants and healthy animals. I want to see growth in the number of jobs. I want to see growth in the number of businesses.

Through all these mega-mergers, it looks like we're going to have just one pharmaceutical company providing for the whole world. One seed company, one water company.

But we need to shift that, so we have a genuine growth of proliferation into a number of companies that's appropriate. And that's the goal of localisation; not to end trade, but to restore democracy, and to restore the responsibility of business to respond to ecological and cultural realities.

Chapter 3
On Inner Resilience

Arne Naess used the term ‘self-realisation’ to indicate a kind of imagined perfection, a process and a goal for both for the individual and for the community. Inner Resilience combines Naess’s idea of self-realisation with another view of human equilibrium, resilience, or the capacity to adapt to change.

This chapter starts with Ajay Rastogi introducing a secular nature-centred mindfulness practice which he teaches as part of his work at the Foundation for the Contemplation of Nature in the Himalayan village of Majkhali, in Uttarakhand, India.

Then Egyptian conservationist Noor Noor guides us along his own personal path into mindfulness and – drawing on his experiences of the 2011 Egyptian Uprising – explains how facing trauma led him to a new understanding of how we might view our place in the world.

Conservationist Judith Schleicher describes how daily meditation has been helping her with her conservation work ever since she attended a 10-day Vipassana retreat in Peru. Lastly, we meet Christoph Eberhard, legal anthropologist and practitioner of the Chinese and Indian traditional arts. Christoph believes that dialogue is at the heart of meaningful transformation: dialogue with oneself, with others, with nature and with the beyond.

Naess used the term 'self-realisation' to indicate a kind of imagined perfection, a process, and a goal for both the individual and for the community. The term 'inner resilience' can be defined by a number of characteristics.

For example:

1. Inner resilience is meaningful and desirable, but it can sometimes be painful. It is not synonymous with comfort. It is a process of spiritual maturity where a person acts more consistently by drawing from themselves as a whole.

2. Inner resilience is a continuous process. It can be achieved through knowledge and learning, but it demands a consistent practice that includes the cultivating, communicating and sharing of compassionate values.

3. Inner resilience evolves new types of skills that are needed for transformation, including empathy, respect, humility, consensus-building, and co-creation.

4. We cannot be separated from the planetary processes that we are part of. Our own health and wellbeing cannot exist at the expense of others.

Ajay Rastogi

Ajay Rastogi at the Foundation for the Contemplation of Nature's headquarters, the Vrikshalaya Centre. Vrikshalaya means home of the trees in Sanskrit.

Hi, my name is Ajay Rastogi and I live in the village of Majkhali, in the state of Uttarakhand in the Indian Himalayan region. It's about 400 kilometres north of Delhi and we overlook the high Himalayas with many 6000-metre high peaks. I have been an ecologist and an environmentalist for a large part of my life. I used to work with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) as the organic programme coordinator for India. The basic drive to move back was to find a tool for the transformation of people from inside, so that they can connect deeply with nature.

Ajay Rastogi at home in the foothills of the Himalayas, 2019.

The fact that we are unable to make big changes in society that are needed for sustainability means that we need to look again at the approach environmental movements have taken so far. For that reason, I was thinking that meditative practice, which can be done in nature, could be transformative in making us understand that we are an integral part of the natural world. Meditation is considered as a method for inner transformation.

Experiential transformative learning

We have a residential programme based out of village homestays. These are typical rural homesteads, structures where there is no running water and the toilet is outside. Participants are supposed to stay for a two-week programme and help their host agrarian families, doing the same work that they do. They learn about everyday work: taking care of the cow, getting fodder from the forest, getting enough drinking water from the springs.

Students on the Mountain Resilience Leadership course learn how a mixture of cattle dung and water produces biogas for cooking stoves.

Ajay helping to process the village lemon harvest, Majkhali, 2020.

The programme is based on three pillars. One is called 'the dignity of physical work' because, unfortunately, we are losing the connection to working with our hands. The second is 'interdependence' because sometimes we feel that if we are economically sound then we don't need anybody else – 'I just spend money and get whatever I want'– but that's not how society is structured, that's not how sustainability comes about. The third thing participants learn about is 'interconnectedness', which is more about the landscape and the elements, where the water is coming from and so on. It is about knowing that this does not happen by itself, there are trees and filtration is taking place, there is some soil which can absorb water. It's not as if it comes out of thin air. It needs to be nurtured.

We have a structured programme now. It's a three-credit course, with the collaboration of Western Colorado University, called Mountain Resilience Leadership. We have also worked with the National Outdoor Leadership School for the past nine years. Students from all over the world come and participate in these programmes.

Bring nature to our consciousness

The nature-based mindfulness practice that we call the 'contemplation of nature' is done in natural surroundings, if possible. It is a multisensory experience. It helps because we are biological organisms and we have an inherent need to connect with nature. It's kind of how we are genetically wired, so the contemplation of nature is not as abstract as many people find other meditative practices to be. It is good for beginners to feel the interconnectedness of all beings.

People can start with the contemplation of nature and then go on to learn about other deeper levels of meditation. But the contemplation of nature is definitely an approach that can be done on a daily basis. It quickly brings us to a level of tranquillity that gives us all the benefits of the meditation: the compassion, the kindness, the

deeper connection to the natural law as well as to the social community around us.

At about the 23rd minute of meditation, a response known as the relaxation response activates a deeper trigger in our bodies. The relaxation response allows the body and internal chemistry to function in a much more regulated and balanced way. This also brings other benefits, including a gentle detachment from the continuous flow of thoughts and emotions, and deeper awareness and insight into our interconnected being.

The contemplation of nature:

1. Observe nature with a soft gaze

2. Accept with gentle detachment

3. Send love with sympathetic attention

Three steps for contemplating nature

So, all we do is sit and observe with a soft gaze. You can contemplate nature indoors with very simple objects from nature, following the three steps of nature contemplation that we have designed. The three simple steps of the contemplation of nature are: observe nature with a soft gaze, accept your thoughts, emotions and sensations with gentle detachment, and send love to the world with sympathetic attention.

By observing nature with a soft gaze, we bring nature into our consciousness, all the time accepting with gentle detachment our thoughts, emotions and physical sensations. We are not interested in finding details or drawing conclusions. Of course, our minds will wander here and there, but as soon as we realise this, we gently bring our mind back to simply observing nature with a soft gaze.

One very important element of any meditation practice is to let go of your thoughts. You do not do this by fighting them but just by observing them and acknowledging them without judgement. This is what sympathetic attention means. Be gentle with yourself and just remind yourself of feelings of gratitude and oneness with nature. We sit, we observe softly with a gentle gaze, and continue sitting with gentle detachment. No matter what thoughts come to mind, don’t make any judgment about where you are, or what you are doing or thinking. It is this step that is transcendental in nature, and therefore a fundamental aspect of the practice. Being able to sit quietly allows us to somehow transcend a call of judgment and ‘the thinking mind’, at least for a little while.

Noor Noor

Noor Noor, Wadi El Rayan National Park, Fayoum, Egypt, 2013. Picture by Adham Bakry for Dayma Journeys.

My name is Noor Noor. I am a 28-year-old Egyptian and am doing a Masters in Conservation Leadership. Before coming to Cambridge, I spent seven years managing an NGO called Nature Conservation Egypt, working on the conservation of habitat species and local communities.

Growing up, I was a child of the city. My parents were dedicated to social justice and political and economic rights, but they didn't bring me out into nature much. It wasn't part of my upbringing. In 2011, Egypt saw one of its most incredible yet traumatic uprisings, where hundreds of thousands of Egyptians went out on the street in a call for bread, freedom, and social justice. As a result, significant changes came about. Some of them were for the better, but lots were for the worse.

We were met with huge violence from the people that were in charge at the time, specifically the armed forces. There was conflict between the army and protesters calling for a complete transition to a more democratic, human rights-oriented government. As a result, there was heavy persecution. Egyptians are still heavily persecuted by the state. Throughout 2011, hundreds of thousands of Egyptians who were involved in these demonstrations had to run for their lives. Once you've actually had to run for your life, you realise that life isn't really what it seems. I went from always being prepared to sacrifice myself for the cause, to realising that I am actually more useful alive and healthy. Part of that realisation came through spending time in nature for the first time.

Noor Noor, Lake Nasser, Egypt, 2013.

A healing process

I started spending a significant amount of time in nature. While learning about nature, I was also teaching nature conservation as a part of a new job that I had started in 2012, and I ended up understanding myself more. Bit by bit, I encountered mindfulness. At the beginning, I really hated the term 'mindfulness' because I felt it was very counter-intuitive, but the more I read about it, the more it resonated with me – on a theoretical level, a political level and a personal level. For me, spending time in nature and understanding how it works – letting oneself be inspired and healed by nature – that, in itself, is a mindful process.

The Egyptian uprising created a lot of physical and emotional trauma for everyone. It was even worse seeing it inflicted on those that I cared about, people who share a common political ground. Accumulated traumas are still carried by thousands until this day.

There's no romanticising revolution; there's no romanticising conflict or uprising, but somehow, I am absolutely grateful for it because I ended up having to face these traumas, and that led me to think more holistically. We all need to get through the inevitable crises we are facing on this planet and will continue to face at an exponential rate in the future.

"There's no romanticising conflict or uprising, but somehow, I am absolutely grateful for it, because I ended up having to face these traumas, and that led me to think more holistically."

Working with nature

After the 2011 uprisings, I knew I wanted to work out in the field. I was lucky to get a job in nature conservation with an NGO, as well as working with a company called Dima that offers educational environmental tourism. These jobs made me aware of the dimensions relating to our survival, to sustainability and to justice. I realised the importance of nature and of the natural resources we depend on.

What many people are realising now is that the political, economic and even social dynamics relating to us as a species are all directly or indirectly part of our relationship with nature. The fact is, we cannot continue to separate ourselves from the things that keep us alive. Starting from our food, all the way to the air we breathe, everything is dependent on other living beings that inhabit this planet. The conflicts we have over resources, the trajectory that we're taking towards collapse of the systems that support us, all this is caused by the fact that we continue to separate ourselves from the nature.

'Political ecologies' is excellent as a term to encompass what we need. It means that we need to think about the social, economic and political structures that govern nature. If we're looking at development, we need to think about the social and ecological processes that support us and nature. We need social, economic and political ecologies.

"If we're looking at development, we need to think about the social and ecological processes that support us and nature. We need social, economic and political ecologies."

The ramifications of privilege

To be honest, we're all implicated. The phone that I'm using now; the components that were used to make this phone are not sustainable. It has been designed with built-in obsolescence. The mining of resources destroys nature and communities. The coffee that I am sipping on is supposed to be ethically sourced but, in the end, it has come from somewhere very far away. We've become so dependent on these things and they are fundamentally destructive.

Looking back to look forward

Back when I was fifteen, my father was imprisoned by the Mubarak regime, the regime that was in power in Egypt for thirty years. My father was sentenced to five years in prison. At that time, I remember telling myself: "You have a minute to feel whatever you want to feel. And then as soon as that minute's done, switch it off, go back and continue your day. Don't dwell on it in your head, just move along."

I remember being fifteen and telling myself these things. Obviously, that might not

be the best solution, but I remember forcing myself to learn how to disconnect from these anxieties and the fears in my head, in order to be able to function. Ten years later, I found myself acknowledging my anxiety for the first time. I realised that I've been breathing wrong my entire life. We're not taught how to breathe when we're kids. No one tells you to breathe through your stomach when you're a child.

Noor Noor, Aswan Reservoir, Egypt, 2013.

Judith Schleicher

I'm Judith Schleicher. I am currently conducting postdoctoral research at the Department of Geography at the University of Cambridge. I've always been interested in tropical forests: their diversity, the people who live there, the cultural diversity, the biodiversity, everything. I have always wanted to work towards protecting this diversity as well as understanding people's needs and how conservationists can have better working relationships with people.

Judith Schleicher at the David Attenborough Building, Cambridge, 2019.

When I was doing my PhD, I started my meditation practice. Working on the relationship between nature and people after my PhD just seemed to bring together my key interests: nature, people's relationship with the natural world and meditation.

Our environment shapes how we think about our needs

From the location where I am right now, all we can see is concrete and a parking lot. If that's the kind of environment people grow up in, they have very few opportunities to connect with nature. This can have a negative impact on their development and personal growth, but it also has a huge

impact on our society. It means that in future, as a society, we might care even less about nature, and do less to protect what's left of it.

I think it is particularly important that we look inwards. We need to reflect about ourselves and our own wellbeing and start by making the changes from within. Once we have a balanced mind, we can try to make changes. These important considerations need to be part of our education system and part of how we grow up. It is key that we learn how to take care of our mind and our mental wellbeing from a young age. This would be hugely beneficial to how we deal with everyday life and also equip us to face the ups and downs that are part of life. This inner resilience also includes reflecting on what really matters in our lives from an early age.

Children spend so much time in schools being taught things that mainly involve their intellect. Yet in terms of learning development, they are not being taught how to build emotional resilience and how to think about their wellbeing and frame of mind. It is so important to take care of our mind, as it is through our mind that we perceive, interpret and make sense of the world. If we could make that a fundamental part of each person's life from an early age, it would be a hugely positive and transformative change at a both a personal and societal level.

I would love to see, for example, mindfulness and meditation being part of the

"I think it is particularly important that we look inwards. We need to reflect about ourselves and our own wellbeing and start by making the changes from within."

normal school curriculum and to have children discussing what really matters in life. If we internalise this growing up, we can start having these kinds of discussions at a larger scale; about what direction we want to take, from our communities to the national level and society as a whole. The internal training of our mind has to start at a personal level.

Although mindfulness and mediation is increasingly talked about it, many people are still unfamiliar with what it means. They might think it is a religious practice or Buddhism, but meditation does not have to have any religious connotations. It can be secular. It is about achieving self-awareness and a balanced mind. Working in conservation can be really challenging because you are always fighting an uphill battle. You are constantly confronted with negative news about the decline of nature.

Judith Schleicher out in nature in Lachay National Reserve, Peru.

This can be depressing and have a negative impact on one's mental and emotional wellbeing. But meditation can transform how we experience life. It has done that for me.

Jumping into meditation

I was working on fieldwork in Peru and lots of things were going wrong. Then my friend, who has been meditating for a very long time, said there was a ten-day silent meditation course coming up in Lima. She said to me: "Why don't you just do it?"

Although I had never thought about meditation and what it really was, and had never tried it, I went ahead and did this 10-day Vipassana course. I had no idea what I was getting myself into, but it was an amazing life-changing experience. During 10 days of silent meditation, you go through so many things, many ups and downs, and it is worth every minute. I have gained many positive benefits but the one I am most grateful for is an immense sense of inner peace that I had never felt before. I experienced a strong sense of happiness and contentment that came solely from within and was entirely independent of external circumstances. We can intellectually know this or feel it fleetingly, but deeply experiencing it is a very different thing.

Of course, I still experience daily struggles to keep a balanced mind and internalise this sense of inner peace, and that struggle will continue. But just knowing that this sense of inner peace is there is a very big gift. I have done a few meditation courses since and while the experience I have is different during each one, I have a great feeling of accomplishment at the end. It is a unique and amazing experience when you haven't talked or communicated for 10 days and, as a result, your mind is incredibly focussed and clear. That is when you realise how one's mind is hugely impacted by the constant reflections going on within it at all times.

Our mind is coping with large amounts of information every day. A silent meditation retreat calms the mind because it is receiving far fewer external stimuli. The impact becomes especially clear once you start talking again after the course ends – your mind goes back to its usual noisy state of constant thoughts and reflections.

Finding flow through awareness

An important first step in meditation and mindfulness is awareness. You might feel that you become more sensitive after meditation, but actually you've just become more aware of something that was always there. When you are not aware what is impacting you, you can't look after your mind and body in ways that are most beneficial.

Nature can provide the kind of space where you can develop mindfulness. For me, it is an ideal environment. Many of the things I experienced through meditation I had experienced before. Out in nature, you naturally come close to a sense of deep happiness and contentment. If I sit in a forest, which is the environment I love most, I never feel alone. I can feel alone when I am surrounded by lots of people in a non-

Judith Schleicher taking in the view of the cliffs and bird colonies at Bempton Cliffs in the UK. Photo by Jean-François Jamet.

natural environment. But I don't feel alone if I'm just 'being', out in nature, on my own.

In our society, we are taught to be productive, that we should be doing and achieving all the time. It is much healthier to move away from that, at least for some time, and just be in the moment, alone or with other people. Contentment and happiness come from an awareness or presence in the moment without any judgement. Nature provides the natural space for this, it helps your mind to be in the moment.

Judith Schleicher in Lachay National Reserve, Peru.

Judith contemplating the Liepnitzsee outside Berlin, Germany. Photo by Jean-François Jamet.

Finding flow

Over the years, I have volunteered on various meditation courses and found it interesting to work with other people who practice meditation. For example, I have worked in a kitchen with several other meditators who I had not worked with before. We were cooking for over a hundred people on a silent mediation retreat, in what was a very demanding work environment. We had to work towards a strict timetable and cook a lot of food in a very short time. This would normally be a stressful environment for many people, but meditation practitioners who are aware of their own state of mind tend to be more conscious of each other's needs and this makes a big difference. It changes the whole experience, creating a much more relaxed work environment and flow. It makes it enjoyable because of the sense of community and team cohesion you

feel. It would be really transformative if I could translate this flow into my day-to-day life with everyone I work and interact with.

I practice daily meditation. I aim for at least one hour a day, and sometimes more. It makes a huge difference to my everyday life and has also made a difference to how I think about conservation. Before I started meditating, all the gloom-and doom rhetoric could be really disempowering. Sometimes I felt as if I could never really make a difference, but meditation has given me an inner feeling that nature will cope regardless. Whether humans will cope or not is a different question. Meditation has made me a lot more peaceful from within and, with that, I am more in balance to do whatever I can, in order to fight for a more just and environmentally sustainable world.

Christoph Eberhard

Christoph Eberhard on a friend's catamaran during a 'contemplation of nature' excursion with students in Arcachon Bay, France, 2018.

I'm Christoph Eberhard. I'm Austrian and based in Archachon, in the South of France. I think my whole life has been devoted to a quest for peace or harmony, a living harmony. On the one hand, it led me to study social sciences and to a career as a legal anthropologist. This meant working between law and social sciences, trying to see how we could live together with increased dialogue; understanding each other and harmonizing with each other a bit better. The second aspect has been dialogue as inner dialogue, and as dialogue with nature, which we are part of. That is especially expressed in my interest with the traditional arts, especially the Chinese internal arts such as Taiji Quan (Tai Chi Chuan) and the Indian arts, such as yoga.

What is dialogue?

For me, inner resilience is a question of dialogue. Dialogue is listening, but it's not only listening with your ears, it's also listening with your heart. And even more than that, it is listening with your soul. We can experience that in our day-to-day lives. For example,

by trying to take a bit of time to harmonise before doing something, just for five or ten minutes or so. By not starting to speak immediately but just letting the mind settle, and being rooted in a certain way.

This simple act can change a meeting. Sometimes people don't want to do it. They say they don't have time to do it, but actually just sitting quietly and calmly completely changes the whole atmosphere. And if you do it, you will find that people are much, much more open to real dialogue, to really listening to each other, and to sharing their experiences. If you really want to have a dialogue with a person, you have to be able to suspend judgement and listen to them. You have to be willing to let yourself be challenged by their world view or the sensitivity they are expressing. On the one hand, this experience can be enriching but it can also be very challenging and shocking.

"Slowly, you start to deepen this dialogue with others and yourself by listening more to yourself. You start to realise on a deeper level that you are actually connected and dependent on other people and the nature all around you."

We may not want to hear certain things, or we do not actually hear certain things until we have heard them a hundred times, and then suddenly realise, "Oh wow. There was something much deeper in what they said than I thought." When this happens it's a kind of a challenge. It also leads to a second kind of dialogue, which is the dialogue with oneself. You start to become aware of what your own invisible horizon is. How we relate to other living things and what our actions mean. We actually need dialogue with others, because otherwise we can never become aware of our own personal limits.

Slowly, you start to deepen this dialogue with others and yourself by listening more to yourself. You start to realise on a deeper level that you are actually connected, and dependent on, other people and the nature all around you. Once a certain sensitivity to listening has been opened up, you start to listen to the trees, to the sun, to the flowers and to the clouds and, in a certain way, the environment talks to you.

If you want to listen, first you have to empty yourself and allow everything to 'speak' to you. The dialogical aspect of nature starts to unfold. So, it's a dialogue with oneself, with others and with nature. And then there's this other dimension which I call the beyond. It is whatever you want to call it, a force that is beyond words and which you cannot really express, but which we feel is there.

Understand that everything is connected

Sometimes when we talk about our inner being, we kind of separate or distinguish it from the outer. For me, I would rather say that the experience of entering into dialogue with yourself – or entering into dialogue with nature or the beyond – is more a process of creating links and connections.

Christoph Eberhard practicing Wudang Taiji Jian, or Wudang Taiji Sword, in the Wudang mountains, China, 2013.

You may have an idea of being separate from the world, or a feeling of separation from others or from nature, but as you practice dialogue, you become aware of connections that have always been there. Nature is more than just objects which are outside, a second world of objects. It's not just what we perceive as the living reality; nature is the whole of life. Some people seem to think of nature as a collection of objects, and people as robots who should behave in a certain way. At the same time, we may even forget that we ourselves are living biological subjects.

You can start dialogue from any of the four dimensions I have mentioned. If you're somebody who has grown up in very natural surroundings, maybe your first dialogue will start with nature. Shepherds spend lots of time alone, living for months up in the mountains. So, they are attuned to having a dialogue with nature, perhaps more than a dialogue with people.

I am more of a city person. And so, I am used to being confronted with people as my first point of reference. But it is important to note that all these dimensions are always there. At the moment we begin to open one of these dimensions, little by little, we start to realise how everything is much, much more linked together than we ever expected.

"Nature is more than just objects which are outside, a second world of objects. It's not just what we perceive as the living reality; nature is the whole of life."

Discovering abundance through dialogue

It is very easy to look at the 'other' and only see what they do not have. This is a construction; it is a way people construct an image of the other as an inferior version of themselves – because they don't have this or that or haven't done this or that. Dialogue is about trying to empty yourself of your own projections and ideas, so you just listen. It

allows you to simply open up and discover the abundance or plenitude that is the other.

This means you start to realise the many relationships that you are connected to through your being. Even from a western scientific perspective, we are really children of the stars; the elements we are made up of are created in the stars, so we have an actual relationship with them. Unfortunately, modern consumerism, generally speaking, presents life as a void to be filled. We feel that we must have a certain social status and achieve certain things. The moment we dare to step back a little, we find that life is actually very rich, and there are many things that can enrich our lives without us having to push too hard.

So, we have the physiological level, but then we have our emotions. We have our thoughts and feelings. All these dimensions are interlinked. By contemplating nature, which we perceive as being outside, we actually establish a deeper relationship with nature. We create emotional connections. This may mean that when we care for the environment it isn't just because it is our duty, but because we feel its beauty. We establish a relationship on a deeper level than just the intellectual, and this can translate more naturally into action.

But at the same time, contemplating outside nature brings us back to our inside, inner nature. We start to feel that we are part of nature, in the sense that we are part of the whole planet, solar system and galaxies. Now we know about the multiverse, everything we understand is part of a broader concept of nature.

Awareness is really creating links where we didn't see them; links where there was separation, which is very important in ecological thinking. You start becoming interested in more holistic approaches because you realise that you cannot just cut things into pieces. They're always related, and whenever you change one thing, there is always an effect on the whole.

How to start to feel your life energy

If you start practising Qi Gong, or if you start practising any movement, do so with a relaxed body. Really allow yourself to start 'tasting' and feeling what you're doing. Start by doing it slowly and doing it with a gentle awareness and no judgement. Little by little, you will start to feel what the Chinese often call 'Qi' which is energy. This is experiential. You may feel some tingling in your fingers, or you may feel some warmth rising in your body. If you continue, you may feel it more inside, like a kind of a magnetic feeling. Sometimes it has a kind of electric feel to it.

Just take some time to sit quietly and watch your breath every day. At the beginning you are very much in the psychological state and full of thinking of this and that. That is totally fine. After some time, your mind begins to settle, just like a glass of water. It settles and becomes clearer and more transparent. When that stage starts to happen, you become more aware of things circulating in your body, that is basically Qi. It is very real.

This brings me to the reaction to the experience. The culture we live in – I'm talking of city culture – it blunts us to a lot of our experiences. If you live closer to nature, you have to survive in and with nature. Your senses are much more refined. So, in a certain way, we have colonised our minds. Even now I still realise how much my mind is colonised.

Christoph Eberhard practicing Wudang Taiji Quan in the ruins of an old temple in the Wudang mountains, China, 2013. The movement is called White Crane Spreads its Wings.

"We are not gods, we are not the masters of nature, or kings of nature. No. We are just a very humble tiny part it."

It's a very, very big learning process. The more you practice and just listen, the more you start to realise that your body does have an innate intelligence and it understands certain things. You have to put the awareness there; you have to try to listen; you have to practice. It won't just come if you don't do anything. But once you do start practicing regularly, little by little, you learn to grasp the difference between what your illusions are, and what things are real. You can see past what you feel.

We are not gods; we are not the masters or kings of nature. No. We are just a very humble tiny part of it. This is the importance of humility. You recognise that you yourself are a part of nature and also a wonder of the universe. It's amazing. And the humbler you become, the more beautiful the whole of life becomes.

Chapter 4
On Transformation

In this chapter, we have one guest, Swedish social entrepreneur and co-author of the *The Nordic Secret*, Tomas Björkman. Tomas s also the co-founder of London-based research institute Perspectiva and has been a member of the Club of Rome since 2014. After leaving the world of finance, Tomas established the Ekskäret Foundation on a beautiful island in the Stockholm archipelago. The foundation has the sole purpose of facilitating sustainable social transformation by nurturing the connections between personal and community development.

Rather than trying to create a comprehensive definition of nature that works for everyone, we can consider the basic principles of deep ecology:

1.

The wellbeing and flourishing of human and non-human life on Earth have value in themselves. These values are independent of the usefulness of the non-human world for human purposes.

2.

Richness and diversity of life forms contribute to the realisation of these values and are also values in themselves.

3.

Humans have no right to reduce this richness and diversity except to satisfy vital needs.

4.

Present human interference with the non-human world is excessive, and the situation is rapidly worsening.

5.

The flourishing of human life and cultures is compatible with a harmonious co-existence. The flourishing of non-human life is dependent on this.

6.

Policies must therefore be changed. The changes in policies affect basic economic, technological, and ideological structures. The resulting state of affairs will be deeply different from the present.

7.

The ideological change is mainly that of appreciating life quality (dwelling in situations of inherent worth) rather than adhering to an increasingly higher standard of living. There will be a profound awareness of the difference between big and great.

8.

Those who subscribe to the foregoing points have an obligation directly or indirectly to participate in the attempt to implement the necessary changes.

Tomas Björkman

Tomas Björkman at Ekskäret, the place where oak trees grow, Sweden, May 2019.

I used to be a business entrepreneur. In this role, I started a lot of different companies in information technology and property and then went into banking. I was the chairman of a banking group when I left business in 2006 and started to think about what to do with the next part of my life. I came to the conclusion that I wanted to set up a foundation in Sweden that would work with the interrelationship between personal development and societal change.

I built the foundation on the island of Ekskäret, which means 'the place where oak trees grow'. Out in nature, I have always felt more connected to deeper layers within myself; I believe nature can be a catalyst for that connection. Once the foundation was up and running, I started a small research institute in London called Perspectiva and some co-live and co-work initiatives in Stockholm and Berlin.

I also wrote three books. The first one, *The Market Myth*, summarises an insider's view of the market; how the market creates a lot of efficiency and value, but is not a good instrument for creating human and societal wellbeing. My second, *The World We Create*, has a strong emphasis on the idea of 'we' and the fact that there are many more human-created aspects to the world than we realise. I would say perhaps 90% of the world we live in today is a human invention and all of this could be radically different. One example is, of course, the market. We tend to look at it as a natural phenomenon, but it is entirely a human construct. Even the free market (if there is such a thing), could essentially be different from how it is today.

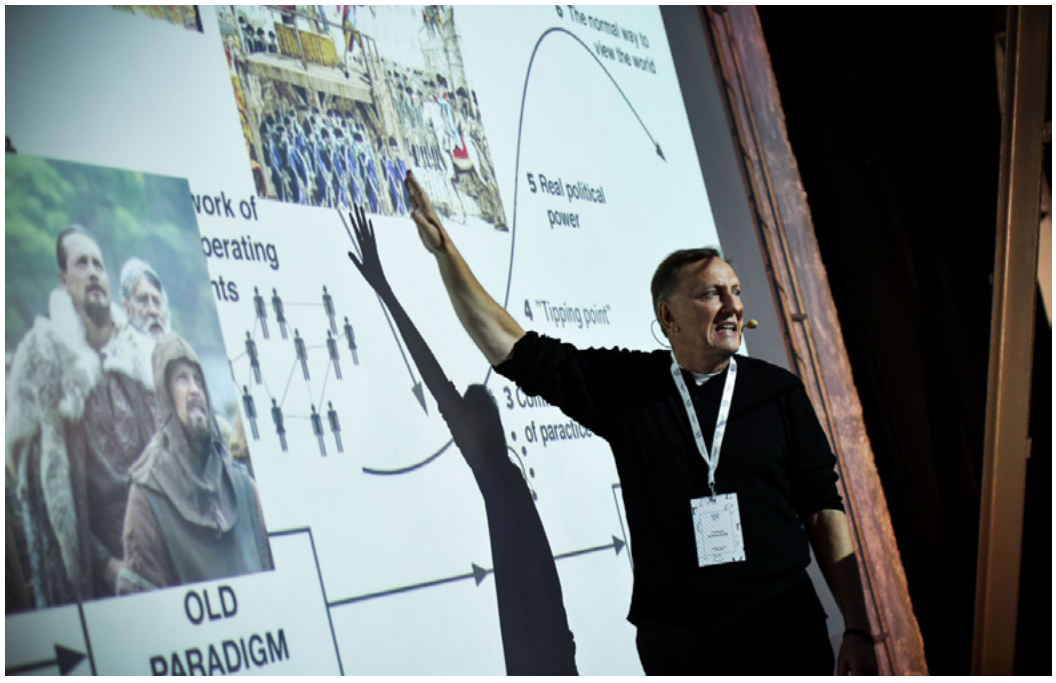
Main building at the Ekskäret retreat centre, Sweden.

My latest book is written with a Danish philosopher and friend, Linda Anderson. It is called *The Nordic Secret* and is about how inner personal development has played an essential role in the development of Nordic countries, helping them transition from being the poorest

non-democratic agrarian countries in Europe, into the world's happiest and most wealthy stable industrial democracies. All this happened in the course of just a few generations.

Timelines of change

The story I tell in *The World We Create* is the story of a humanity from its very early stages – from the time we first became humans, more or less a couple of million years ago. We start with the invention of fire, perhaps half a million years ago, and transition to the beginning of culture, arguably 50,000 years ago, with the book describing the ongoing story of technological evolution. From here, humanity has taken many big steps. The invention of agriculture was something that completely changed the way we lived and related to the world, and we began to build huge cities and empires on the back of agriculture.



Tomas Björkman's keynote lecture on metamodernism at the Emerge Gathering in Kyiv, Ukraine, September 2019.

Technological development is nothing new, but the speed of today's development occurs at a rate we've never experienced before. That creates a lot of problems, a lot of stress, but we also have technological development to thank for all the beautiful lives we live today compared to our ancestors. The world my grandparents lived in as teenagers was, compared to the one we are living in, very poor and difficult.

The meta-crisis of our times

The Enlightenment was the last time we had a very substantial transition, both in our society and our worldview. We have the Enlightenment to thank for creating a more scientific approach to the world, but also for many of the problems we experience today. Many human-made problems are caused by a rationalistic, scientific worldview, and that worldview is at the centre of many different crises.

The environmental crisis may be the most urgent crisis we have today, but we also seem to be entering into a severe political crisis. We certainly have health issues

on a scale that we haven't seen before; one example is the obesity crisis found in many parts of the world, not just in the West. We have the opiate crisis in the United States, and throughout the West, there is a mental-health crisis. We have an inequality crises within countries, but also between countries. And all these are not different crises, but symptoms of the one underlying meta-crisis of our time.

Humanity has gone through radical transformations many times, both in worldviews and in society. But the transformation that we are now going through is different from the previous ones. Change today is shaped by three major aspects. The first aspect is the speed of transformation; the second is the global impact on the environment; the third is the possibility that we have to move from systems based on scarcity and inequity to a world based on abundance. By this, I do not mean material abundance, but an abundance of wellbeing.

The speed of change

In the past, when we transitioned from an agricultural to an industrial society, we made that transition between generations. This meant that if my grandparents were farmers, and their children gave up farming and moved to the city during the industrial revolution, my grandparents could still remain farmers for the rest of their lives.

Now, because technology is changing so fast, we actually have to reinvent ourselves many times during our own lifetimes. If you just think back on your own life, you can count how many completely different technological worlds have you already lived in. I remember a world before television. Then, of course, we had the introduction of mobile phones. Then came the era of personal computing and then highspeed Internet. After that, smartphones changed everything again.

Each one of these technological steps have been so significant that not only have we been forced to reinvent our business models but also our private lives. Now, we live in a world where we have to reinvent our lives and our careers every 10 years. Soon that will be every fifth year, and then it might even be every second year. That puts a lot of psychological stress on us. Our brains are not evolved for this amount of change. So far, most of us in the history of humanity have lived in the same world we were born into.

Human impact on our planet

The second important shift is, of course, the unprecedented impact humans are having on the planet. We might have exploited and overused our local natural resources in the past, but then we had the possibility of moving somewhere else and letting nature heal. Now the impact we are having on the climate and our environment is global and exponentially larger in scale. Again, our brains are not really evolved to be able to see this.

This limitation in our capacity to perceive the global impact is one of the major problems we have today. We do not emotionally perceive the way we are destroying nature; we did not have any reason to develop such feelings in the course of our evolution. Now, when we really need them, they are lacking. That is why many people are emotionally detached from the environmental catastrophe we are facing.

Tomas Björkman showing the 'World Value Survey'. Just as we broke out of the medieval paradigm 200 years ago, now it is time to break out of our postmodern paradigm.

From scarcity to abundance

The third major shift is the shift from scarcity to abundance. Like many animals throughout evolution, we humans have developed in a world of competition and of scarcity. Our minds are hardwired for scarcity, as are our economic systems and our society. As an example, we think that for a market to function you need to have a limited supply that meets demand. In this situation, the market needs scarcity. With technological development, however, it becomes possible to distribute all the wealth that our current economic and technological system produces. If we distribute that wealth in a fair way, then already we have enough wealth for all of us to live very decent lives; the kind of lives my grandparents could only dream of as teenagers.

"If we distribute that wealth in a fair way, then already we have enough wealth for all of us to live very decent lives; the kind of lives my grandparents could only dream of as teenagers."

Of course, we will not all be able to own and drive cars and consume material goods at the level that some of us do today, but still there is enough wealth for everyone to live a life with an abundance of wellbeing. That is, of course, good news if we are entering into a world of automation where we do not need to work 40 hours a week for 40 years of our lives. If you look upon this possibility through the lens of the labour market, however, you only see the threat of massive unemployment. It seems

impossible to approach a world of potential abundance with a mindset and social systems that are geared and developed around the concept of scarcity.

A new mindset for transformation

The three major challenges humanity needs to pass through right now are: the speed of change driven by technology, the human-made environmental threat, and the possibility of transitioning from a world of scarcity to a world of abundance. For this to happen in a positive way, I think that we need a change of mind and a change of heart. When I speak about a change of mind, I'm thinking about the worldview that we have today – the Enlightenment worldview, the reductionist worldview, the scientific worldview. We shouldn't give up on that worldview completely because it is very helpful in some situations, but it definitely needs to be complemented with other ways seeing ourselves, our society and the world.

The island of Ekskäret provides a beautiful venue dedicated to explorative initiatives, such as courses in personal development and other meetings for inner growth and social transformation.

We need to have a change of heart to open up to greater possibilities as human beings. You could say that this is the development of compassion and consciousness; the kind of skillset we need as individuals, and as a society, to be able to survive and flourish in a very challenging new world. Transformative skills are essential for humanity to navigate the great societal transition we are just beginning to see the start of.

Transformative skills

You can define transformative skills in different ways. We can talk about a set of skills connected to openness, or the ability to seek new perspectives. Another one is sense-making, the ability to turn facts into insights. Then there is a cluster of skills centred around critical thinking and coming into contact with our own inner compass. A cluster called compassion could include things such as empathy, self-compassion and other forms of compassion. The good news is that science has shown quite

consistently that all of these skills can be developed. So although you may not be born with much empathy or openness, or the ability to seek different perspectives, you can acquire these.

“We need to have a change of heart to open up to greater possibilities as human beings; to be able to survive and flourish in a very challenging new world.”

Tomas Björkman talks about the importance of focussing on new ways of thinking, doing and being.

That’s the good news. The bad news is that they can’t be taught in the standard way. You cannot just send someone on a three-day course in compassion and expect them to be transformed. These transformative skills really need a form of experiential learning that involves deeper conscious and subconscious psychological processes. Some researchers call this form of learning ‘transformative learning’. Transformative learning engages your mind and your heart to transform the way you view the world, and your place in the world.

Integrated skills for an uncertain future

At my foundation on Ekskäret, we’ve learned that close contact with nature is a catalyst for Transformative Learning. In this rapidly changing and uncertain world, we do not know what our next career step will be, and how will we have to reinvent ourselves. It is a safe bet to develop transformative skills of compassion, openness, and sense-making. These sorts of deeper skills will always be needed. And the same goes for your children.

We do not know what the labour market will look like in 10 years, even less so in 20 years. Politicians are still talking about programming as a critical skill, but experts tell me that programming is one of the first tasks that will be automated by artificial intelligence. I would say that deeper transformative skills will always be in demand, so I would put a strong emphasis on them in education.

The last time we had this huge shift in worldview was when we went from a dogmatic, religious way of looking at the world to the rational scientific worldview. Right now, we are in the need of an equally drastic change. This time I don't think it's about giving up the old worldview entirely, but rather complementing and integrating different ways of seeing the world. We can take insights from both the scientific and religious, or spiritual, worldview and increase our emphasis on our inner world and our capacity for meaning making. We can use the postmodern worldview which contains very important insights about hidden power-structures and the way that society communicates and is socially constructed.

"It's a safe bet is to develop the transformative skills of compassion, openness, and sense-making. These sorts of deeper skills will always be needed."

Five shifts in worldview

Going forward, our new worldview will need a number of lenses through which we can see the world, and I can think of five major shifts in worldview we should consider. The first would be to move away from viewing ourselves in isolation; economic theory sees people as utility-maximizing individuals and does not tell the story of how interconnected and interdependent we are. Simply maximizing my own happiness is not really possible – in a world of finite resources, my happiness and wellbeing are dependent on the happiness and wellbeing of others.

A second shift is to move away from viewing the world as a set of things and beginning to understand that most of the phenomena in our world are actually self-organising, self-developing systems. The world is a dynamic interdependent process and applying a systems view to the world – specifically an evolutionary systems view – could be very fruitful.

The next shift would be in how we view the human mind. Our mind is not just the rational decision-making machine the philosophers of the Enlightenment would have us believe. The human mind is also a constantly developing complex system and it is under development throughout our lives. This development can either be facilitated or hindered by our environment.

The fourth shift would be to move away from a view of our society as something that is given, towards a realisation that we are all co-creators and our society is socially constructed. Whether we are aware of it or not, we are all either replicating or constructing society. Once we become aware of our role as co-creators of social reality, we have a huge responsibility to participate in creating this reality. This can be very empowering.

The fifth shift in worldview is about how we view our lives. We need to begin to realise 'more' is not necessarily better. We need to move away from seeing development and progress in mainly material terms of growth and wealth. When we start to see how much our inner life matters, connectedness, purpose and meaning become very important. If you start to see the world from these new perspectives, you can imagine a completely different world. Many of the political decisions and structures, struggles and fights that we see in the world today suddenly appear to make no sense whatsoever.

1.

We are interconnected and interdependent beings.

2.

The world is a dynamic living system of self-organising planetary processes.

3.

Our consciousness as a species is evolving. This development can either be facilitated or hindered by our environment.

4.

We are all co-creators of society. Whether we are aware of it or not, we are either replicating or constructing society.

5.

Purpose and meaning are far more important than the accumulation of material wealth.

Nordic Retreats for personal development

The conscious development of transformative skills has happened before. We have a very interesting historical case in some of the Nordic countries; certain strategies were put into place when these societies were moving from being the poorest agrarian, non-democratic societies in Europe, to becoming the happiest richest and most stable industrial democracies. During the middle of the 1800s, Sweden was so poor that about 30% of the working population emigrated to the United States. Conditions were

very severe back then but Swedish society then developed very quickly, in just a few generations, even in the period before the Second World War.

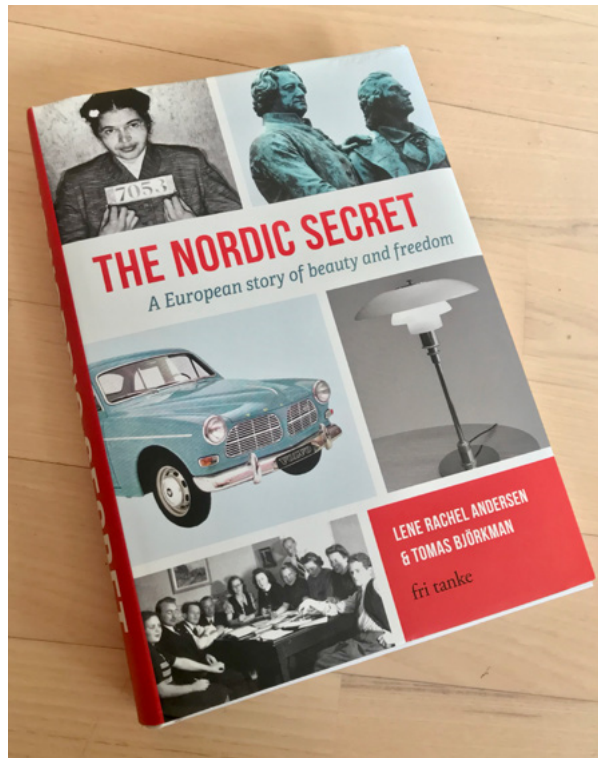
“We need to move away from seeing development and progress in mainly material terms of growth and wealth. When we start to see how much our inner life matters, connectedness, purpose and meaning become very important.”

The story *The Nordic Secret* tells us how, back then, all the Nordic countries had visionary intellectuals and politicians. They saw the industrial revolution and urbanisation happening in Britain and on the continent, and they knew that technological advances meant this was coming to Scandinavian countries as well. They also knew that in such situations of societal change, it is easy for humans to start looking for something external in which to put our hope. This could be a dogmatic religion or an authoritarian leader who appears strong – it could be an Erdogan or a Trump, for example. But these Nordic visionary politicians were firmly committed to building democratic societies and they knew that the only way to build strong democracies is to build them from the bottom up.

“A democracy needs a substantial part of the population to be able to hold on to the complexity of rapid social change without external authority.”

A democracy needs a substantial part of the population to be able to hold on to the complexity of rapid social change without external authority. It doesn’t have to be the majority, but you need a large part of the population to be sufficiently grounded in themselves, and in contact with their own inner compass, to be conscious co-creators of the new world that wants to be born. The way they tried to create emancipated conscious co-creators was quite extraordinary; they created what today we would call ‘retreat centres for inner growth,’ to develop transformative skills and other capacities.

At the turn of the last century there were 100 of these retreat centres in Denmark, about 75 in Norway, and roughly 150 in Sweden. These centres were mostly located in nature, using nature as a catalyst for transformative, personal development. Young adults in their early 20s could spend up to 6 months at one of these retreat centres, with the express aim of finding their inner compass. Later on, they could even get a full state-subsidy for this, with the express purpose of helping them become conscious co-creators of modernity.



The Nordic Secret: A European story of beauty and freedom, 2017, by Lene Rachel Andersen and Tomas Björkman.

At these centres, you were given the basic tools to engage in civic life and you learned how to create civic organisations or associations. You learned how to start an NGO, how to write a speech, how to write an article, how to argue your case. You also learned the latest technological developments in industry and crafts, so you could embrace technological developments and not be afraid of them.

When these centres were at their height in the 1920s, 10% of Sweden's younger generation had an opportunity to go on one of these half-year long retreats. It was very much the working and farming classes who took advantage of these retreats, so suddenly, you had a cross section of society that could act as co-creators of modernity, and a new socially democratic society.

Still today, in Scandinavia, we see the effects of massive-scale resources devoted to personal development. Unfortunately, today, the Nordic secret is also a secret unto ourselves, and we have lost our understanding of how important that inner world is. Around the time of the Second World War, we became very positivistic, very scientific, and started to see an inner world and subjectivity as more of a problem than a possibility.

The philosophical roots of the Nordic secret

Even today, our history books do not describe these retreat centres as centres for personal development, or centres for the development of consciousness and transformative skills. They are described, more or less, as adult educational centres. They still exist today and are called Folk Schools; they still receive massive state funding, but their activities are more in the realm of updating schooling or exploring crafts and cultural activities in part-time classes.

So, who inspired these early politicians and intellectuals in Scandinavia? How did they know about the importance of our inner world for societal development? The answer is that the ideas came from German idealist philosophers writing at the beginning of the 1800s: philosophers such as Goethe, Schiller, Von Humboldt, and Hegel. These philosophers were reacting against the Enlightenment view of our mind as a purely rational decision-making machine. John Locke or René Descartes also understood that the human mind is actually an organic system embodied in the totality of our bodies. Our mind and capacity for learning are not just housed in our brain but embedded in, and dependent on, multi-sensory experiences, including the experience of our cultural environment. Contemporary developmental psychology and research into mind and consciousness are now confirming these ideas. Our minds are embodied in the totality of our bodies – and dependent on and embedded in our culture.

"They created these educational retreat centres to give people the tools to develop their own inner compass and transformative skills, for the conscious development of society. And it actually worked."

Early philosophers knew that an important step in the development of mind is the step from becoming externally directed to being inner-directed. This doesn't happen to everyone; most people, conscious of it or not, are still very much influenced by an external authority. For democracy to really work and develop, you need to have a substantial part of the population grounded in themselves and in contact with their own compass. That is exactly what the early democratic intellectuals and politicians in Scandinavia took note of, and that is why they created these educational retreat centres, to give people the tools to develop their own inner compass and transformative skills, for the conscious development of society. And it actually worked.

The vision of deliberative developmental societies

The development of consciousness, or lifelong development of our mind, is no longer valued; we have forgotten about the importance of our inner world and how to actively cultivate values such as compassion. But I do see a bit of an awakening in Scandinavia. There is a new realisation of the importance of the inner world, and it is coming from an unexpected place – the corporate world.

Many people in the corporate world are seriously concerned about the abilities of organisations to keep up with the rapidly changing social and technological environment. This puts a lot of strain on organisations, but also on individuals within corporations. Quite a few Human Resources departments know it is necessary to focus on the personal development of everyone in the organisation if they are to

become self-organising co-creators within the organisation.

New types of transformative skills will enable organisations to be agile enough to constantly reinvent themselves and react to continuous change. If this can be accepted in the corporate world, why can we not talk about personal transformation in the same way for societal development? The environmental catastrophe we are facing makes it absolutely necessary to look at internal development – and consciousness development – on a societal scale. I hope the Nordic countries can again play a leading role in driving this mindshift.

"I think all nations now need to become deliberate developmental societies. And that was really at the core of the Scandinavian model."

The Scandinavian model is unique. I would use the analogy of a self-organising organisation. A hundred years ago, the vision was to create a deliberately developmental society. There is a notion that the ideal organisation should be a deliberately developmental organisation (DDO for short). A DDO supports the development of all individuals in reaching their full potential. Somehow, we need to come back to that idea for both organisations and society. I think all nations now need to become deliberate deliberately developmental societies. And that was really at the core of the Scandinavian model.

We can at least have a vision of a good organising process, moving forward. I think this is where we need to have the democratic debate today, and that is where we need to have the vision. Creating a deliberative developmental society where we empower as many people as possible to participate in the co-creation of our future world.

Chapter 5
On Happiness

According to Naess' interpretation of the philosophy of Spinoza, happiness is best realised through living 'out in the world'. Other philosophies suggest that a life of contemplation is the path to enlightenment, the ultimate happiness. It is, perhaps, the struggle to balance our inner values and desires with our external actions that makes the achievement of happiness more of a process than a destination.

This chapter presents two people who have dedicated their careers to understanding the relationship of values to our behaviour, and to examining how our sense of wellbeing has a direct impact on the

world around us. Tim Kasser is a leading psychologist and Emeritus Professor at Knox College, Illinois, USA, and has published empirical evidence that demonstrates there is a direct correlation between an individual's values and happiness and their environmental impact.

Dasho Karma Ura, director of the Gross National Happiness (GNP) centre in Bhutan, discusses how the centre's framework for happiness offers an in depth and holistic approach to development, which also takes into account the health and wellbeing of our ecology and community, and that of future generations.

In order to examine the subject of happiness, a few key points could be considered.

1.

The next major shift in paradigm will be a shift in values and perspective.

2.

Human activity needs to be appropriate to the limits of human and ecological scale.

3.

Technological advances should ensure human wellbeing as well as managing amenities.

4.

It is a human right to have access to public areas free from commercial activities.

5.

Communal spaces can empower people to be creative, sharing insights and resources locally.

6.

Cities and regions can sustain the ecology of place by embracing the ever-changing nature of life.

7.

Architecture can protect and provide public access to our common natural heritage.

8.

Best practice models already exist that are relevant for the health of humanity and of the planet.

Tim Kasser

Tim Kasser, 2013.

My name is Tim Kasser. Among other areas of study, for about 30 years I have been looking at people's values and goals and how these relate to wellbeing and ecological damage. I'd already done a lot of work on people's values and goals, and how they relate to personal wellbeing and social outcomes, when Kirk Brown approached me and asked: "What about sustainability?" So, together we did a study, around the year 2000, where we began to look at how people's values and goals related to ecological outcomes – particularly people's ecological footprint and their attitudes and behaviours around this. That really sparked my interest, and I started to do more work in that realm.

There's a lot of psychological research on wellbeing, but typically, the focus is on how happy an individual is – as in how 'not depressed' or 'satisfied with life' people are. Comparatively, there's relatively little research on how wellbeing and living-well does or does not damage other people's opportunities to live well, other species' opportunities to live well, or opportunities for future generations to live well. If we really want to understand wellbeing, I think we have to get beyond what you would call 'the user' or how a psychologist would talk about personal wellbeing. We need to focus more on social and environmental wellbeing.

The impact of wellbeing

One of the major messages you often hear from politicians is that society cannot focus too much on sustainability as that will decrease people's wellbeing, because they'll have to give up X, Y, and Z. What Kirk Brown and I set out to do – and I think we were the first people to do this – was to test this idea. Is it really the case that psychological wellbeing and ecological wellbeing are incompatible goals, or might they actually be compatible?

In two studies, we measured people's personal wellbeing via reported life satisfaction and their experience of pleasant and unpleasant emotions. We also measured their ecological footprints and their ecological attitudes and behaviours. What we found, in both samples, was that personal and ecological wellbeing were positively correlated. That is, happier people tended also to be living more ecologically sustainable lifestyles.

That study was published in 2005, and then in 2017, I wrote a summary of literature on this topic. It turns out that our finding that personal wellbeing and

ecological wellbeing are positively associated has been replicated in about 15 or 20 other research samples, cross-culturally, with lots of different kinds of measures of wellbeing, and with lots of different ways of measuring environmental behaviour. So, the relationship that Kirk and I discovered seems to be a robust one.

“Personal and ecological wellbeing were positively correlated. That is, happier people tended also to be living more ecologically sustainable lifestyles.”

Intrinsic and extrinsic values

Another question that Kirk and I asked is: “What allows personal and ecological wellbeing to be positively correlated?” What are the psychological mechanisms that allow personal and ecological wellbeing to be in concert with each other?

We looked at three different possibilities, all of which had some data to support them. The first one, which was the topic I’d been studying for a while, was people’s values. We found that part of the reason why people who are happy are also living more sustainably is that they focus on intrinsic values for their personal growth and connection to other people, and for helping the world. They focus less on extrinsic values, for example, making a lot of money, accumulating material possessions, having the right image or being popular. All those latter values are, of course, encouraged by consumer capitalism. So, one of the reasons people are likely to be both happy and sustainable seems to be that their values orient them in a certain way. The natural outcome of having a focus on intrinsic values is being happy ‘in the moment’ and living more sustainably.

“The natural outcome of having a focus on intrinsic values is being happy ‘in the moment’ and living more sustainably.”

Mindful lifestyles

Another variable we examined was one that Kirk had been studying: mindfulness – which is the practice and ability to be with one’s thoughts, in the moment, in a non-judgemental way. Kirk was one of the first researchers in psychology to really investigate mindfulness. And what we found was that people who were more mindful were also living more sustainable and happier lives. So, there’s something about mindfulness that leads towards both those wellbeing outcomes.

The third thing we looked at was lifestyle. You’ve probably heard of the idea of

downshifting, or voluntary simplicity, where people decide that they're going to live a simpler life by not buying into the normal work-and-spend lifestyle. We had about 400 people in our study, 200 of whom were 'simplifiers' and 200 of whom were mainstream Americans. We found that those who were living voluntary simplified lifestyles were more likely to be both happy and living more sustainably. Compared to mindfulness and values, lifestyle was the weakest of the three factors, but it did seem to matter.

"Intrinsic values can lead us to practice our lives in ways which have important consequences for our own personal wellbeing, but also for how we treat other people and the planet."

Our results seem to provide a pretty hopeful message, because the research suggests that there are things people can do in their own lives that are conducive to both happiness and sustainability. They can nurture intrinsic values, become more mindful, and align their lifestyles with their values and their mental practices. The findings also suggest that all those messages that tell people we have to sacrifice and give stuff up that makes us happy in order to have a sustainable world actually may not be true.

Another thing we found, by the way, was that people who are more mindful tend to have more intrinsic values and to be less materialistic. And people who were voluntarily simplifying their lives also tended to have more intrinsic values and be less materialistic.

So I think you can see all these variables as grouped into a way of life that stems from what people think is important, or what people think is not so important. Intrinsic values can lead us to practice our lives in ways which have important consequences for our own personal wellbeing, but also for how we treat other people and the planet.

Intrinsic versus extrinsic values

Intrinsic values concern aims in life, such as personal growth, family and helping the world be a better place. Extrinsic, materialistic values concern aims such as money, image, and status. One thing that we've learned about those values in the past decade is that they stand in a dynamic opposition to each other. They're in a kind of a tension with each other. To describe that opposition, I use the metaphor of a seesaw in a children's playground: when a kid sits down on one end, the kid on the other end goes up. The same happens with these values: the more people focus on intrinsic values, the less they tend to care about materialistic values, and the more they care about materialistic values, the less they tend to care about intrinsic values.

This model of values led us, over the past several years, to do studies in which we momentarily activate in people's minds one or another set of values. After such

an activation, we can then measure what happens to the other values. If we get you thinking about money, for example, the research shows that you'll care more about money- and image-related topics and you will care less about helping other people. If we get you to think about intrinsic values, even momentarily, then you'll care more about things like the environment and helping other people, and less about things such as money, status, and power.

There is research that suggests that an awareness of nature is one way to activate intrinsic values. Exposure to nature helps us build up that part of the human value system; it gets people more focussed on intrinsic values. This is good in and of itself, but also good because a concern for nature seems to suppress more materialistic values. This has to do with the way the human value system is organised. As you get people thinking about nature, they tend to become more aware and caring about nature. This builds up intrinsic values which, in turn, suppresses more materialistic values.

Netta Weinstein and her colleagues produced studies that support this idea. They exposed people to pictures of nature or pictures of human-made objects. She measured how immersed people became in those pictures and then she measured their values afterwards. She found that if you gave people pictures of nature and the people became immersed in those, then their intrinsic values went up and their materialistic values went down. This did not happen if you showed them pictures of nature but they did not become immersed, or if you showed them pictures of human-made objects. That finding makes good sense from the point of view of how values are organised: Immersion in nature activated more intrinsic values, which naturally suppresses more materialistic values.

"As you get people thinking about nature, they tend to become more aware and caring about nature. This builds up intrinsic values which, in turn, suppresses more materialistic values."

Nature can change our outlook

In 2009, the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) in Scotland created something called the Natural Change Project. There were a lot of different elements to the project, but essentially, they created a focus group for leaders in the business, political, and artistic worlds, all of whom were not very concerned about nature. It was not that these leaders disliked nature or didn't care about nature, more that their lives weren't organised around trying to improve the environment; that's just not what these people were focused on. For around a year or so, WWF took these leaders and conducted a variety of deep eco-psychology interventions which, if memory serves me correctly, culminated with a dawn-to-dusk sitting in nature. They were asked to sit down in one spot by themselves and stay there until it got dark, observing their surroundings for several hours.

The Natural Change Project showed that after the programme was over, when the leaders reflected on what their experience out in nature meant to them, they began saying that things such as money and status didn't really matter to them as much anymore. Instead, they became more focussed on things such as relationships, promoting the community and sustainability. This result fits really well with the Weinstein findings and what we know about the organization of the human value-system. I think it is not much of a leap to suggest that if it is possible to shift people's values, then a transformative experience like the one these leaders experienced could have later impacts in terms of specific behaviours and choices in which such people engage.

"When the leaders reflected on what their experience out in nature meant to them, they began saying that things such as money and status didn't really matter to them as much anymore."

Emerging models in business

My most recent book is called *Hypercapitalism: The modern economy, its values and how to change them.* It's a cartoon book actually – a cartoon version of me is the narrator – and my co-author/illustrator is a guy named Larry Gonick. Throughout the book, we talk a good deal about the fact that many businesses, and most of the really powerful ones, are organised around a publicly traded for-profit model. One problem with this model is that, at least here in the United States, it means the business has to put shareholder profit as its primary concern. This directly relates to a conflict in value systems, in which the more one is focussed on profit, the less one is going to care about the environment. When push comes to shove, if a publicly traded corporation has to make a choice between helping the environment or making a profit, a barrier will be met.

In one of the chapters of *Hypercapitalism*, my cartoon-self talks about how I used to be very dubious about changes in business and had given up on that as a possibility. But I changed my mind as I realised there's just no way around the fact we've got to intervene if we want to limit the negative impact on people and the planet. There's a lot of excitement in the business world right now. People are developing interesting and cool alternative ways to organise businesses so that you don't have to hit that barrier between profit and negative impact. For example, if you look at worker co-ops or benefit corporations, you can start to see the emergence of new ways organisations can try to focus on profit at the same time as sustainability and social justice.

"When push comes to shove, if a publicly traded corporation has to make a choice between helping the environment or making a profit, a barrier will be met."

What is hypercapitalism?

Capitalism is a particular economic system (and we could, of course, talk about what this entails), but essentially, I think that after the Second World War – especially since the late 1970s and early 80s in North America and Europe – there has been a shift towards a more extreme form of capitalism. During that time, globalisation was expanding and there were stronger pushes towards privatization, along with a huge rise in consumerism. We also had a modern type of advertising suddenly being pushed out through all kinds of media, especially the television.

In addition, we experienced deregulation in parts of North America and Western Europe, with governments allowing businesses to do more or less whatever they wanted in order to maximise economic growth. There was a kind of fetish for the ideas of economic growth, moneymaking, profit-making and consumerism. So the 1970s and 80s, in my mind, began an era when we were no longer in capitalism anymore. We were in a more extreme version that put materialistic values at the forefront, further suppressing intrinsic values such as equality, or caring about the environment. And it was around the 1980s that we began to see working hours going back up, inequality going back up, and we arrived at a relative lack of movement on environmental issues. Hypercapitalism – a term that has been around for some time – describes this shift.

Neoliberalism

Neoliberalism is the fundamental economic and political philosophy that fuelled the rise of hypercapitalism. A lot of neoliberalism's ideas emerged out of post-Second World War destruction and the advent of the Cold War, and this was part of the rise of the Chicago school of thought regarding economics. Neoliberalism became especially dominant in the 1980s under Ronald Reagan in the US, and Margaret Thatcher in the UK. That's when you begin to see an expansion into a global hypercapitalist society.

"There was a kind of fetish for the ideas of economic growth, moneymaking, profit-making and consumerism. This began an era when we were no longer in capitalism anymore."

Among neoliberalism's fundamental tenets are deregulation, privatization, and globalisation. There is an idea that government should regulate the marketplace as little as possible and that production and sales should be as globalised as possible. There is also a desire to turn over as many government functions

as possible to the private sector, supposedly because the private sector's motive for profit will make them more efficient, and then give everybody better products and better services. Really, the fundamental belief, or faith, of neoliberalism is that when you turn things over to the invisible hand of the free market, and get government out of the way, then good things will happen.

I would argue that neoliberalism's tenets are 'articles of faith'. They are not proven and there is plenty of evidence to contradict them. Don't get me wrong, capitalism has been remarkably successful in doing what it set out to do, which is to provide a lot of products at relatively cheap prices for a lot of people. This process created a great deal of wealth and succeeded on capitalism's own terms. But if one cares about equality, or sustainability, or about authenticity and wellbeing – which happen to be things that capitalism doesn't claim to care about – then I think one has to question capitalism and, more specifically, global hypercapitalism.

"The fundamental belief, or faith, of neoliberalism is that when you turn things over to the invisible hand of the free market, and get government out of the way, then good things will happen."

Here's where we're back to that fundamental value dynamic where the more people and organisations and society and political structures focus on maximizing wealth and consumption, the more that extrinsic, materialistic values will have been activated and encouraged at the expense of intrinsic values such as compassion, equality, sustainability, and all the rest.

Making change to cope with change

If we can trust all of the data, I think we're starting to see that we're heading down the wrong road. In a historically very short time, we have created unprecedented negative impact on the environment. And we can either throw up our hands in despair, or we can rapidly start to develop alternative models. We need to work on these alternative models and study and modify them as they're being developed, so we can try to stop a series of crises from happening. And if that's not possible, then at least when crises do happen we can say: "Hey, try this, not that!"

"The Nordic countries, in particular, have pushed to explore and develop alternative models and alternative practices, and to try to make changes at structural and lifestyle levels to show what's possible."

This is where I think that the Nordic nations and Northern European nations such as the Netherlands and Germany, have been real leaders. The Nordic countries, in particular, have pushed to explore and develop alternative models and alternative practices, and to try to make changes at structural and lifestyle levels to show what's possible. What is also fascinating is that surveys show that Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Finland, and the Netherlands are consistently among the happiest nations in the world. There are many reasons for that, but the fact remains that nations moving in more sustainable ways are shown, in study after study, to be among the happiest in the world.

"There is a 'there' which I can see and understand and, given what I know as a psychologist, I theoretically believe in. It has empirical data behind it; it is also very consistent with almost every spiritual and philosophical tradition in the history of humanity. And there are people doing it right now."

Hope for the future

In the scope of human history, it's actually a pretty short period of time that we've been living under hypercapitalism; it's been 40 or 50 years, and that's a relative blip. If that is the case, then it is possible to have a different system outside hypercapitalism. For me, the question we should be asking is fairly straightforward: How do we orient our personal lives, our businesses, our communities, and our governments around intrinsic values rather than extrinsic values?

The way to get from here to there is a different issue, but what makes me optimistic is that there is a 'there' which I can see and understand and, given what I know as a psychologist, I theoretically believe in. There are so many examples of how to create thriving and sustainable businesses and local economies, and to rejuvenate land that has been degraded, and live in happier, more sustainable ways. It has empirical data behind it; it is also very consistent with almost every spiritual and philosophical tradition in the history of humanity. And there are people doing it right now.

People often ask me: "So what should I personally do now?" I would encourage everyone to begin working at your town or city level to promote sustainable ways of organising. Get engaged in the local city or municipality. Try to change your town or your city, because that is where people live and where the impact can be felt. If you can make something work at a town or city level, it will provide a model that can be transferred to another province or even to the federal government. People might say: "Hey, it worked here. Let's try it at another place, and another place."

Karma Ura

Karma Ura, Thimpu, 2019.

I am Karma Ura, and I'm presently the president of the Centre for Bhutan and Gross National Happiness Studies. It's an autonomous government-sponsored think tank, located in Thimpu, the capital of Bhutan. We have the mandate to conduct research on Gross National Happiness, policy background studies and the culture of Bhutan. My background is in economics and philosophy at MA level, and I have a PhD in International Development. My professional life – about 30 years now – has been devoted to alternative development; its indicators and statistics on one side, and Buddhist philosophy, literature and fine arts on the other.

I am also a painter and I design artefacts and performances. For example, I designed the thousand ngultrum note for the currency for Bhutan. I have painted the murals in a temple, and I designed a national cultural festival which is held on December 13th each year.

On notions of development

The idea of development is usually introduced from outside. It is frequently based on an idea of industrialisation, certain standards of living and the expansion of the economy. Alternative development involves indigenous ideas about how we should transform society. If you have ideas about transformation of society, and different goals than western mainstream ideas, then that would qualify as alternative development. The main goal of development in the context of Bhutan would be the happiness of the people and this involves the nine domains of Gross National Happiness.

Living standards is only one of the nine goals of development in Bhutan. The domains are: health, education and living standards – these are fairly well-known ones which are followed everywhere – along with slightly newer ones: good governance, environmental or ecological resilience, and cultural diversity and resilience. So that

comes to six domains. The last three domains are on the frontier of development. These are: psychological wellbeing, community vitality, and balanced time-use over 24 hours. In Bhutan, we consider these nine domains of Gross National Happiness as the causes and conditions of happiness.

The Centre for Bhutan and Gross National Happiness Studies, Thimphu, Bhutan.

The nine domains of Gross National Happiness in Bhutan:

1. Psychological Wellbeing
2. Health
3. Time Use
4. Education
5. Cultural Diversity and Resilience
6. Good Governance
7. Community Vitality
8. Ecological Diversity and Resilience
9. Living standards

Gross national happiness background

The phrase was first explicitly coined in 1979, by the fourth King of Bhutan, Jigme Singye Wangchuck. For some time, Gross National Happiness (GNH) was realised through the legislation and policies of the government, led by the King. In 2006, Bhutan adopted the nine domains of Gross National Happiness, and along with it, we were directed by the fifth King of Bhutan to create the GNH Index. That is our current quantitative framework.

In 2008, Bhutan became a parliamentary democracy and, since then, governments have been elected through a universal franchise system. The constitution was also adopted and that obliges the government to pursue a quantitative framework of GNH. The framework has a set of very specific criteria to guide politicians and bureaucrats in our long-term goals.

Measuring happiness

I think we have to be clear, when we talk about happiness, how we measure happiness in Bhutan and internationally. We also need to show what currently accepted comparative rankings of nations are based on. As you know, the Nordic countries come on top in the ranking based on subjective wellbeing. But we need to clarify that compared to the GNH Index, The World Happiness Report is based on a very narrow measurement of happiness. Our GNH framework is much more comprehensive, and broader. It is more probing about reality and context, and goes further in defining what human beings are and what they need. According to our framework, humans need many aspects simultaneously for wellbeing, and these are included in the nine domains of Gross National Happiness.

In ecological terms, Bhutan's leadership and achievement is quite significant in the world, one of the nine domains is ecological diversity and resilience. The government of Bhutan, with the leadership of our Kings, has managed to maintain a very high environmental quality so that people's welfare, which is intimately dependent on the quality of the environment, is very high. The contributions of Bhutan to global climate change is unusually high, as is the positive vision that GNH offers the world.

At the moment Bhutan is carbon negative: 72% of the surface area is covered with forest, and 52% is protected. Most of our energy is supplied by hydroelectricity which is green energy. People have access to unspoiled nature and clean air in their daily lives. Unfortunately, I think size and scale can impress people more than these facts. However, the aims enshrined in the United Nations Global Assessment Report, released on 6th May 2019, are all met by Bhutan. All its ideals, all its goals, would have been met by Bhutan in the field of environment, climate change and biodiversity. But Bhutan is too small to have a global impact on its own. As a country, we have taken on an extraordinary burden for the sake of the global climate and biodiversity. What we

do on a per capita basis is outstanding, and the framework bears relevance to how we view development as a global community. The principles and domains are relevant for all humans.

Karma Ura at the protected marshland area of Khotokha, Wangdue Phodrang, Bhutan, 2020. This is a nature sanctuary for cranes and other wildlife.

Measuring happiness versus measuring absence of poverty

To recap, the nine domains of Gross National Happiness are: psychological wellbeing, health, time use, education, cultural diversity and resilience, good governance, community vitality, ecological diversity and resilience, and living standards. We also have, compared to current definitions, an expanded definition of each domain. Psychological wellbeing is both the emotional and spiritual aspects of wellbeing. Community vitality means that since we are social by nature, companionship and good relations are at the forefront of an individual's wellbeing. Interdependence and interconnectivity are crucial for maintaining wellbeing. Balanced time use means that nobody should run out of time to do the things that are vital to their own wellbeing and happiness. We all need some freedom over how we manage our daily time.

All the nine domains are, in reality, highly interdependent and interconnected. It is important to see them in relation to each other rather than in isolation. I think they are relevant to any place where there are human beings and other sentient beings. That takes us into the question of why and how the indicators are constructed and how the indicators are used as benchmark in national planning in Bhutan. So far, international development has been driven by, and attached to, a notion of poverty. But poverty is minimal definition of wellbeing – it is a survival definition and does not define what wellbeing is. It is, in fact, the absence of wellbeing! Happiness is a maximal concept of wellbeing and it is also universal, attainable and achievable.

Dancers from Royal Academy of Performing Arts in Thimpu, Bhutan, performing a folk dance during the Dochula Druk Wangyel Festival at Dochula, Thimphu, Bhutan, December 2011.

In Bhutan, the structure of happiness, in terms of nine domains, is related to specific criteria and measurements. We grade each domain in the GNH index using 33 sub-indicators. So the GNH measurement is quite distinct and different from current measurements of poverty and subjective wellbeing. Both the latter measurements are based on much narrower definitions of wellbeing.

I am one of the council members for the United Nation's World Happiness Report, which is the result of a Bhutanese initiative. The Government of Bhutan organised a United Nation's Expert Meeting, in April 2012, in New York. It made two recommendations at that time. One was that governments around the world should make happiness and wellbeing a focus of their public policy. The second recommendation was that the United Nations should declare a World Happiness Day. Both recommendations were implemented, and the World Happiness Report came into being, led by John Helliwell and Jeffrey Sachs.

From criteria to policymaking

One of the characteristics of the GNH index, and its 33 sub-indicators, is that you can disaggregate the achievements across all domains, and across different demographic variables such as age, gender, or region. This enables us to use the GNH indicators as a sort of lens to identify exactly where there are differences or discrepancies, whether these are between men and women, old and young, urban and rural, and so on. We can quickly gain insights based on the national survey conducted every four years.

Karma Ura in the forest of Khotokha, Wangdue Phodrang district, Bhutan, February 2020.

Social and economic planning is done every five years, using the results from the national survey to inform five-year plans and create benchmark case studies, targets, and policy focus areas. We can also measure experiential outcomes such as emotions, health and life-satisfaction scores. In terms of happiness, I must say there is still a gender difference. Women in this country score slightly less than man, although it is not a huge gap, with 95 percent confidence. This gender discrepancy in the attainment of happiness disappears above the age of fifty, but the performance on the happiness scale is lower for a woman if we compare women and men below the age of 50.

We have found that reproductive health is playing a negative role in women's attainment of happiness. The government can take this finding into account and take direct action to strengthen maternity and child healthcare. We changed our policy to give maternity leave of one year, out of which six months is paid for by the state. Unfortunately, we still have only seven days of paternity leave; it remains one of the big problems in Bhutan that the relegation of domestic chores, and the burden of social care, still traditionally falls on women.

But other steps have been taken to introduce safer cooking facilities and electricity. Electricity is free for people in rural areas up to a certain limit. Education, health, and so many other essential things, such as a clean water supply, are also free.

Resisting the forces of globalisation

Bhutan is a country that has escaped colonisation; it's one of the very few countries in the world to have been that fortunate. This means that the continuity of ideas of what our nation should be, or what human beings aspire to be, has not been smashed by external ideas. In Bhutan, we still have a continuity of institutions and ideas that has been able to survive.

Bhutan has continued to be a Buddhist ecological welfare state. Purely Free-market ideas have not been able to dominate. And this is purely because Bhutan has not allowed global corporations to intrude. Bhutanese foreign direct-investment rules

are very strict. Environmental and cultural bars are very high. Those who are just hunting for profit are not incentivised to come into Bhutan. Last year, at the direction of the Bhutanese government, the Centre for Bhutan and GNH studies developed what we call the GNH business certification. This assessment will be applied to all corporations and businesses in future.

Royal Bhutan Army's band performing the mask dance, Jetsun Milarepa and Tshering Chedng, also known as the Five Long-life Sisters, during the Dochula Druk Wangyel Tshechu Festival at Dochula, Thimphu, Bhutan, December 2011.

Evolving Corporate Social Responsibility

For a long time, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) was the buzzword in business. But the shortcomings of CSR is that it does not require much in the way of transparency about how effective these efforts are, or how a company should make its money. CSR merely demands that they use a certain small proportion of the profit for good causes. After CSR, a new model of business are Benefit Corporations, or B Corps for short.

Royal Bhutan Army's band performing Pawoi Magcham, or combat of the heroes, during the Dochula Druk Wangyel Tshechu Festival at Dochula, Thimpnu, Bhutan, December 2011.

Our GNH business certification is more responsive in my opinion, because it applies the nine domains to the workings of corporations in a very explicit way. The GNH index and 33 indicators were designed for the purpose of governance. It is used for research and as a policy screening tool. For example, so far this year, 15 policies out of 22 have undergone GNH policy screening . The aim is to do similar assessments for corporations using the GNH business certification tool.

Limits to growth

Bhutan has a very modest unconventional policy. It is of utmost importance to us as a society that nothing we do steps beyond our environmental-ecological capacity, or our cultural carrying capacity. For this reason, we limit the number of tourists coming to Bhutan. It is not our aim to maximise profit with tourism; it is just one of many activities that should be consistent with the capacity of the country.

Dancers from Royal Academy of Performing Arts performing the Azhe Lhamo folk dance during the Dochula Druk Wangyel Festival at Dochula, Thimphu, Bhutan, December 2011.

A large part of our country is not opened to tourism at all, but the Western side of the country is already receiving tourist numbers in excess of its carrying capacity. For this reason, we must slow down tourism there, to remain in line with our infrastructure capacity, environmental capacity, and cultural capacity. Cultural carrying capacity means that, for example, if a cultural festival in a village can take only a hundred tourists, we will limit tourists to 100. The input and output in any sector should be limited to the amount of through-put the environment can digest.

On measuring the full spectrum of emotional values

In Bhutan, the idea of sustainability is really linked to idea of threshold. We have to have a certain limit to the size of activity, the size of industry, or the size of the sector. We cannot let it balloon out of ecological context. Any industry – let us say the food

or fashion industry – can easily expand and swallow up whole areas. We should put a distinction between what is good to include in the market and what should be left out of the market. Many cultural things should not be reliant on the market. A lot of things about happiness and wellbeing are dependent on non-market exchange, rather than on commercial ventures and commercial exchange. The reciprocity of time, for example, and cultural works, have a huge value on their own, and they do not need to be limited or defined by a market-exchange value. Culture needs to exist independently from commerce for the benefit of society. The whole sphere of culture and community should be under non-market relations and transactions.

“Culture needs to exist independently from commerce for the benefit of society. The whole sphere of culture and community should be under non-market relations and transactions.”

The psychological wellbeing domain is equally important and does not have a direct market value. In other countries, psychological wellbeing is often seen as a problem to be fixed, rather than an opportunity to generate equality and happiness. Now we see a plague of mental-health problems around the world and we need to devise indicators to check on the level of positive emotions across the population,

Royal Bhutan Army’s band performing the mask dance, Jetsun Milarepa and Tshering Chedng, also known as the Five Long-life Sisters, during the Dochula Druk Wangyel Tshechu Festival at Dochula, Thimphu, Bhutan, December 2011.

to measure things such as compassion, generosity, calmness, forgiveness, and contentment. Conversely, we need to measure the distribution of negative emotions, such as anger, jealousy, fear, and sadness. We need to know more about the psychological states of our citizens to be able to create better policies and conditions. People may be seething with negative emotions even though that doesn't show up in the standard ways of measuring the standard of living and Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

When you have a society where negative emotions go unresolved, it is very easy for populist politicians to polarise the population. Governments need to know the inner world of its citizens; how they feel across the spectrum of negative and positive emotions. An advance warning mechanism should be found to gauge the emotional state of citizens before it lands in the lap of radicalising politicians. Scientists, psychiatrists, social scientists need to know. Planners and policymakers need to know.

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Urban happiness framework

At this moment we are almost at the end of developing an urban happiness framework. The probability of being happy or unhappy is now hugely influenced by whether we live in urban cities or rural areas. We have decided to work on an urban happiness framework because, in four of the domains of GNH – psychological wellbeing, culture, ecology and community vitality – we find that urban residents lag behind the rural, although they are surging ahead in two domains: living standards and education.

Division is emerging between those who live in rural areas and those in urban areas and we want to reduce this gap. We can assess the current state of city planning, and we can also guide city planning through the urban happiness framework.
A detailed arrangement of urban planning that is sensitive to wellbeing and happiness has become urgent, really urgent. It's a structural issue.

Chapter 6
On Belonging

As Naess once wrote, there seems to be no place for place anymore. The things that we need appear like magic in our lives and, for that convenience, we sacrifice connection and community. We become isolated from each other as we become more dependent on the corporations that provide the things we need, rather than the people who produce them. Our ecological selves are separated from the very idea of home but somehow, the loss of place is felt on a deeper level, and the longing for home persists.

This chapter presents the voices of three people who have thought a lot about what home means and what defines their relationship to a place. Andrew and Kayla Blanchflower met and fell in love in Oregon in the United States and decided to raise their family in closer contact to the earth and mother nature. As full-time tipi dwellers and artisanal tipi makers, the family migrates seasonally in their converted school bus, inspiring the people they meet to live lighter and with more respect for Gaia, or mother nature.

Yvette Neshi Lokotz is a teacher of hand-drumming and making, practitioner of the 'medicine wheel' or 'sacred hoop' healing, and tribal member of the Potawatomi Nation. Yvette is also the founder of *Star Nations Magazine* that aims to give voice to Indigenous people across the world, highlighting spiritual practices and beliefs.

According to Naess and deep ecology, we need to articulate what it means to belong to a place.

For example:

1.

As humans, we are locally and globally connected at all times. Our everyday life patterns and culture interweave with every other living thing. We need to understand this experience if we are to create profound relationships of stewardship for our own lives and the lives of future generations.

2.

We must not confuse a place with our own house. We do not own a place. Other humans and non-humans have the right to be part of the ecology of a place and it is important for us to share our sense of place with others for that a place to thrive. It does not threaten our own identity or way of life to invite others to share the spaces where we feel we belong.

3.

Natural experiences are not commodities to be consumed. A place is a living entity, a collection of interconnected ecosystems. A place has a value independent of the services it provides humans, but humans can be an integral and natural part of an ecosystem.

4.

There is wilderness and there is countryside; one sees Nature as separate to humankind and the other sees humankind as a keeper of nature. Both concepts are human constructs.

5.

We need to regain a sense of scale. Places and their ecosystems are being degraded by massive amounts of waste and microscopic damage is also occurring, depleting the soil and our nutrition. We must conserve the invisible equilibrium on which all life relies.

Andrew and Kayla Blanchflower

The Blanchflower family.
A walk in the Paha Sapa, Black Elk peak, welcoming the Wakinya Oyate Thunder Nation, Spring equinox, 2017.

Andrew's story

My name's Andrew and I've lived in tipis since the early 1990s. The story goes back to early days in Hulme, Manchester when we would go up to Saddleworth Moor and graze on mushrooms in the autumn. I think that was my first taste of a system that was bigger than any political system, the system that we can call mother earth or Gaia.

We'd come back to Hulme from the moors. Hulme was this low-rise, six-storey social-housing disaster which was actually great for squats and young, single people. I think I've forgotten that time of my life. In my teens there was such a longing and such a feeling of missing something. I remember that feeling when I see people in town these days. They have a look of such confusion, or a look as if they are thinking: "There's something bigger than this, I know that there's something bigger than this," or 'There has to be more."

I remember having these conversations with Tenzin Shenyen – who was called Martin in those days – and we would ask ourselves: "What is the most amazing life that you could dream of for yourself?" For Shenyen, it was being an ordained monk in India or Tibet. For me it was living in a tipi. And then we said, "Okay, why don't we just try moving towards that and see what happens?"

And so that's what happened. I met people who lived in a tipi community, in Wales, of all places. It was a complete revelation to me that people could still do something like living all year round in a tipi. I met some of those people at festivals; at Glastonbury

Festival and various healing gatherings. They were just making a cup of tea around the fire, but I perceived them as amazing, epic characters that knew how to boil kettle in just a few minutes.

Andrew Blanchflower with frozen beard, Dapl resistance camps, Standing Rock reservation, Winter 2016-17.

Andrew and Kayla outside the bus enjoying the sunshine. Resistance camps, Standing Rock. Winter 2016.

Kayla's story

I love the way we met. I think it's so romantic. One evening, Andrew was playing the penny whistle on the street in this little town called Ashland, in Oregon. I was out for a walk. I was actually quite heartbroken, and I was going on a walk with a friend, sort of crying and sharing my broken heart. We parted ways, this friend and I, and I heard this penny whistle in the distance. It just felt so healing and soothing to me, and so I decided I would close my eyes and walk to where the music was coming from. And now here we are, how many years later? It's almost 20 years later and we have five children!

Everyone in the Blanchflower family knows how to have fun making things. Here Kayla is using the grinder to make needles and knifes from deer bones

Andrew on tipi life

Basically we live in tipis because we can be on the ground around the fire. It's a way of manifesting life in the elements, directly. I can get wood and water nearby. I can find a spring or a creek. That's two basics taken care of, as far as the elements go.

Kayla on tipi life

At the moment, everyone's busy in the workshop. All the kids are in there making things; we're making shoes for a trip and making backpacks. We are making a travelling lodge and a bag for the travelling

lodge, and Ayla is making some gifts. She wants to bring these baby carriers to give to some kids that she knows over there. Everyone's really busy using the sewing machines making things for the journey and that's a lot of fun.

Kayla on family life

We have five children and all of our children were born to living in the tipi. That's one of the things that captivated me about Andy, that he lived in a tipi and he had come from a tipi community in Wales. He knew how to make them, and how to live in them in a way that wasn't like roughing it, or camping, but actually quite luxurious. All of our children were born to the tipi, but not all of them were born in it. Some were born in water and our firstborn was born in a birth centre. It was a beautiful birth and it was that birth that set up the rest. It enabled us to be pretty strong about just being us there for the births.

We had a midwife for our first child, and she was a wonderful woman. She's dear in my heart. I have sought counsel with her throughout the births with all the rest of our children, but she did not attend any more births. I'm grateful for her and it really helped me get in touch with the wisdom in my bones of just how to give birth with a lot of love, with whatever family was around.

Tipi in the snow, Blue Ridge mountains, Virginia, 2019.

Kayla on Tipi Village – from Wales to Oregon

It was when we were pregnant with our second child that we wanted to just be somewhere wild where we could feel really comfortable and at home. We decided to go to those mountains in the distance and we set up our lodge. After some days, someone came down to meet us and it turned out they were the title holders of the land. But they loved the tipi.

We made them tea which is what we'll often do when surprise visitors come. We let the fire do its magic on them, like it does. So, these people came down and they had tea and they welcomed us and said that they had access to thousands of acres. They opened their land up to us. They said more people could come too, and that's where the

Tipi Valley idea came in. Andy had been living in Tipi Valley in Wales, in Britain, and what he had learned there had such a strong influence in this little place in Oregon, which we ended up calling Tipi Village. It's amazing that all those stories, people and events were like seeds that floated over here to grow in this other place. I guess stories do that. They travel like that.

Kayla showing her children how to make needles and knives from deer bones, 2019.

People would come and visit us and stay for a while and they would find out if they wanted to stay or not. It was a pretty organic process because if people were up for it – fetching wood and water, cooking on a fire and living with the elements, and dealing with mould and rodents and rain dripping in, and all of these things that have to be dealt with – then they would make themselves a tipi and rise to the challenge, and love it. Other people would quickly, or not so quickly, find out that it wasn't for them, so there was no need for any egos to get involved to say you can or you can't be here. The earth did the sorting out, I guess.

Andrew on Tipi Valley

In Tipi Valley in Wales, they had a big lodge that was always open. Having this communal space brings so much perspective, and if we want new stories and new narratives, we can look back to stories that are 5000 years old. What's common in a lot of those folktales is that the answer to a problem often comes from the periphery; it doesn't always come from looking directly at the problem. It can come in the form of a story about a spirit in the lake or an old woman in the roots of the tree, but we have to be open and willing to hear the lessons in these stories. Maybe it's not going to be until we're at a point of desperation that we will be open enough to listen.

Kayla on what home is

What does home mean? This is a question that is really meaningful to me and we talk about it often in our home. It's been quite a thread for us because we kind of considered ourselves displaced for some time. Andy is not from the west of Turtle Island, as indigenous people here call North America, but we made our family there. All the kids were born there, this whole Tipi Village came out of the ground and blossomed there, and other children in the community were born there too.

For many years, all the families moved together seasonally. There were summer

A cosy evening spent together around the hearth, 2019.

grounds and winter grounds and so we've felt very connected with different places there. We moved within a range, whether that was a valley or a mountain range, and we had a high elevation camp and a low elevation camp. We often hear that the only place where that is normal is in the Nordic regions, where it is more widely accepted and known than it is here to have different seasonal homes.

There aren't so many people who live like us, but we find enough that we are not alone. We've been living on this beautiful ridge all winter with three other families. A community doesn't need to be a huge amount of people. There are enough people here in these three families that we can bounce ideas off each other. There's enough diversity amongst the different skills that the grown-ups have that the kids can go and learn what's inspiring for them. And there's other children here and they have this wide-open wild space to just be in and learn about together.

Kayla on stories

I think, to us, there is some great power in knowing the stories of a landscape and feeling how our own personal stories are woven into those other stories. We know our place because we know the land, and that is why I feel at home. Place is relevant in talking about home, but I don't think home is exclusive to place. Here in the United States, there's that settler colonialism mentality that really claims a place and says "This is mine."

Andrew on stories

Stories are really intimate and woven in with place. They come from a place and they emerge out of the ground. As far as a new narrative emerging, it is becoming apparent that a monolithic, single narrative isn't really the way forward. In order to find unity, we need to decentralise. Someone on a radio show a few years ago was talking about that the only thing that unites us is our uniqueness. We're all different; it is exactly that diversity and difference that gives us the ability to adapt. We're forgetting how to adapt.

People are forgetting how to write on paper. Through the seduction of convenience, people are forgetting how to just rise to the occasion and solve problems because that can make us feel a bit uncomfortable. I don't know what there is to do other than just try to be resilient and adapt. Our relationship with place is much more dimensional than mere economics. Economics is just one single level or dimension of a multidimensional and holistic relationship to place.

Kayla on Standing Rock

I think at that time of living at Tipi Village, I might have been very much the one to say that home is clearly related to place. The story is as tragic as it's beautiful. Eventually the land title shifted hands and we were forced to leave. That's a long story. But eventually it was enough, and we got hold of a school bus really quickly and made a quick conversion so we could get it on the road.

Heading to Standing Rock, somewhere in Idaho, 2016.

For the first year I would say we just travelled around traumatised. We had lost everything that meant something to us. We were forced to leave the birthplace of our children, and we had such a vision woven in with that place, of a future, a way forward. We were so dedicated to this vision and believed so firmly in it.

Tending the land, tending wild plants, returning seasonally, watching it grow, living lightly with this place, as a people, as a community. I think that's when the journey of home being separated from place started for me personally.

We heard that call to go to Standing Rock; it came through very strongly. That's another story, but it was quite an incredible direction for us to head in, after having gone through seven years of Tipi Village, and being able to find our way, living in a bus, with a workshop that made tipis. We were able to just pull up to Standing Rock and make shelter and have our home with us. I think that's where the journey began to shift for me, in realising that home is much bigger than a place. When we got there, it felt like we met our people. I met our people. And our people live all around the world.

There were people from so many places, but there was this common thread that united us. And we kept saying, in so many ways, that it was like we had come home. It had such a profound impact on our lives. We were there for a year. It was the land of the paradox. For me, it was just the richest place I have been in. The spiritual richness was

so potent. That fire was burning so strong and that's what kept us there for that long. The poverty and pain that was there was equally as strong. It was just the poorest and richest place.

And I guess I am speaking beyond our time at the camp at Standing Rock, because we stayed on longer, with relatives that we met who live on the various reservations in the Dakotas. We lived with them after the camps were closed down in February. We continued on, pitched our lodge with some other people who live between the Pine Ridge Reservation and the Rosebud Reservation.

Andrew on nature

This thing that they pejoratively call 'the environment' – as if it's an issue, as if it's something that needs to be taken care of, as if it isn't the whole of everything. All of life runs through this! We have lost our sense of proportion, I think.

Playing on a swing as the sun goes down. Photo by Wrenna Keller.

Kayla on healing

We're all very present. We don't have anywhere else to be except right at home and with each other. We'd like to say that sometimes it's like we have seven pairs of eyes and we are one body, with all these eyes and all these noses and all these ears, just kind of moving through space and time together. It feels like we're that much more aware if we're taking care of each and other paying attention to each other's bodies. We follow the same everyday life rhythm. We heat water on the fire. We have a washtub. That's how we have baths. The healing journey also requires getting sick together.

We're blessed to have each other and to have the family. I send a bit of that good feeling out to those who aren't as fortunate to have a family container to hold them through their challenging times. I feel humbled and blessed that we do have that with each other. We have all the time we need, we're rich with time so there's just no hurry, or there's no loss of job and money. Getting ill, it has information in there for how to live even better, how to be more activated in ourselves maybe. Our bodies are maps.

Kayla on openness

With the way we've been travelling across the country in a bus, it's been a requirement that we be very open. We move really slowly, always receiving the people we meet as guests. It's so curious the way a journey can unfold when we go with such open minds and hearts.

Especially with today's technology, we could really close our reality down so

much by planning our route and planning where we stay and being tied to a destination. But then I think we would miss out on so much. By being so open we make contact with many different kinds of people. I think this grows a kind of adaptability and resilience in our kids, as they have learned to navigate all types of different cultural contexts.

Andrew in Black Rock City, Nevada, c. 2008.

Andrew on openness

Well the way travel is that we carry our tipi and a 28-foot, seven-sided tensile tent shop with us. When we stop we like to serve chai straight out of the bus. We have a classic American school bus; a 1988 Chevy Bluebird. So we might just pull over in a rest area, or in a small town, and put sign up saying: 'Now serving organic chai'. We used to have 'donations welcome' written on the sign, but we thought that had a poor aesthetic, so we scrubbed it off, and people still managed to make donations. Some people wouldn't leave anything, but most people leave a couple of dollars, and occasionally someone left a hundred dollars or even given us bunches of kale, or meat like venison or buffalo.

People are curious when we pull up in town. We've got tipi poles on the roof and water-protective signs on the side. There's often a person in a uniform who comes to talk to us. We'll charm them and invite everyone in for a cup of tea because if we don't, if we're not open, then we can easily be perceived as being dangerous or suspicious because we are so different.

When people do come in for tea though, they always share their sense of longing. People come in and they just smell a very different way of life. I don't know what we smell like anymore, mostly we just smell like wood smoke, I think. We'll be cooking in here and there is a smell of chai; time and time again, there's just that longing for trust. I think there is more of a willingness to engage with fear and maybe that's what we all have to do in order to stop plundering our ecology and our environment. We just have to give in and relax and know that there is enough abundance in the world to provide for us all.

Kayla – everyday life is our home

There are these threads of home we bring with us wherever we go; the tipi and the

fire, and all the dailies that are required to keep that functioning. I think of those like the main spokes of a basket. Maybe tipi life gives our everyday life some structure and some kind of identity? It defines us as a family; this is what we do. We have our bus and our lodge, and we move seasonally, and we don't claim any one spot but we like to meet lots of people. We love the places we stay, whether it's by planting plants and trees, building labyrinths or developing water springs at different places, or gathering plant medicines, or praying, or building sweat lodges.

Andrew fastening the lace pins, 2008. This was a 30 foot tall tipi at Jackson Wellsprings, Ashland, Oregon.

There's so many ways that we engage with places; so many ways we love them. And then we move on. I have to say there is some heartache and sadness about moving on. It's almost like we have to keep moving because of the way the system is set up. I'm not entirely against staying in one spot. It's just not viable unless we do it in this very 'entitled' landownership way. But tending to a place and loving a place and getting to know the stories of a place and weaving our stories into a place – I think that is profound.

Being able to love the place where you are, it is crucial really for a sense of wellbeing, and for knowing our own individual place in all of creation. Even when we look at hunter-gatherer cultures, I don't think that people have ever just wandered around without a purpose. They either move with the seasons, or to access a certain type of food that is only ready in a certain place at a certain time of year. When the salmon run or when the maple syrup is flowing, or the wild rice is ready.

Andrew on honouring life

This time last year we were in New Hampshire and we were tapping maple trees. We made 15 gallons of maple syrup and we still have some leftover. It's a way of diversifying.

From my experience of travelling with indigenous peoples and indigenous cultures, there's a resilience woven into those kinds of cultures.

Looking back to the dictionary definition of what indigenous means, it basically means *emergent from place*. If I can emerge from a place and be in harmony with the elements that also make up my body, that is a way to be alive. If I can honour as much as possible the fact that I am also part of nature, like everything else in creation, I can honour the multi-dimensional shimmering tapestry of life that is all my relationships.

Kayla on the changing landscape

We have all these relationships that are not just the physical relationships that I can see, hear, feel and touch around me. There are also things that make up what is me, the things within me and out of me. How does that shimmer in the way it's supposed to? How does that exist in the way that all the rest of creation does, as the potential to live well?

If only I can perceive life to be like that, there's intention and purpose. It's not a 'bumbling about', it's working with what we have. It's been beautiful where we are now. There are people here who take care of this place. They said come and be here for the winter. And so we have come to stay for the winter; we've arrived and we've been here as fully as we can. And it's been amazing. We arrived in the fall when this place was all going to sleep. And now being here in the spring, we are experiencing a completely new landscape that we didn't know was lying dormant here.

We are discovering a lot of plants and trees as they're all waking up and coming alive. It is so surprising at every turn. We had no idea that we were surrounded by trees that were going to give off so much colour in the spring. It's been so beautiful to get to know a new place. It's been quite an epic and beautiful journey, a lot of it has been feeling like it's a journey of becoming more whole. And a lot of weaving. I think we weave so beautifully together, Andy and I.

Yvette Neshi Lokotz

In your imagination
Imagine going to a place of nature

It's so beautiful there

This is your special place

A place that you know so well

That you may have been many times

Could be in your backyard
It could be out in a park

By a lake the ocean and the mountains
Your special place

Yvette Neshi Lokotz, 2017.

Bosho! That's hello in Potawatomi. My name is Yvette Neshi Lokotz, and I am from Turtle Island – the United States – and I am a Native American woman. I would like to introduce myself in the old way. You always want to know who your people are, to see if you're related. My name is *Bneshi-kwe*, which means Bird Woman, my clan is Thunder. I live in Tomah, Wisconsin.

My grandfather, Misho, is *Shkama-ben*. My grandfather's name was *Shkama*, the ben word means that he has walked on, he has passed away. His name meant 'New Chief'. My grandmother was Ho Chunk; her name meant 'Spreading Wing'. My father, *Kabance-ben* has passed away. *Kabance* means 'To Walk On Earth'. His name is really about the imprint of the moccasin in the soil on Grandmother Earth. My mother is still living. Her name, *She-We-Kwe* means 'Leading Elk'.

So that is how we would normally introduce ourselves, so people have an idea of how to address you. It's all about who is connected to you. It's much more personal.

Yvette Neshi Lokotz making an Indigenous American hand-drum.

About family connections

I'm an enrolled tribal member of the Potawatomi Nation, the Prairie Band. There are nine bands of the Potawatomi Nation. This nine bands were defined by the reservations we were forced into. We kind of got split up that way.

The Potawatomi Prairie Band Nation is on my mother's side. Her father – my grandfather *Skama-ben* – he was a Potawatomi. We follow the patriarchal line, but this has more to do with colonisation. We're enrolled underneath my grandfather's name who received a registered number when he was moved to the reservation.

My grandmother on my mother's side is Ho Chunk. You might classify her as an activist; she was one of those people who was part of changing the norm. She was a very strong woman. Ho Chunk has been in Wisconsin for hundreds and hundreds of years. The Potawatomi started out on the east Coast and migrated west.

My dad was a Mexican Indian from the Yaqui Nation. The area where he was originally from is around the southern border between Texas and northern Mexico. The Yaqui Nation was on both sides of a border long before there was a border. I also have some French-Canadian blood, from people who were married into the Potawatomi side of the family. That is my connection to Turtle Island.

Yvette Neshi Lokotz, drumming to bless and prepare the land, 2016.

About family On Turtle Island

Turtle Island is part of one of the Indigenous creation stories; what we're talking about is the United States. The creation story says that there was a deluge of rain and there wasn't any land. The animals were trying to survive. They would volunteer one by one to dive all the way down to the bottom of the water to bring up soil and create an island.

The turtle volunteered to carry the soil on its back, but it was the muskrat that was able to dive all the way down and grab handfuls of soil to bring up. And so that is how Turtle Island was formed. Everybody survived because they all worked together. The turtle volunteered to carry everyone on its back, so we have a very strong connection to turtle. We have turtle medicine; it means that you're very grounded and connected to Grandmother Earth, and you also have a way to protect yourself.

On a multicultural background

Growing up, there was one way to communicate and experience life at home, and then another way to behave and communicate at school. There are certain traditional ways, like any other culture, right? You don't look an elder in the eye as it's disrespectful. You do not ask a million questions. But then when you would go to school it was the complete reverse. If you don't have eye contact with your teacher, it's disrespectful. If you're not asking questions you're supposedly not interested. On occasion, I would get into trouble.

On Standing Rock

Standing Rock, it literally woke up the world. It shook the world. And, so much came out of that, both positive and negative. But really it brought the world together in that one tiny little place. There were over 500 Indigenous flags flying. People came from all over the world. Sami people came from the Nordic region about three or four different times over that year.

The premise of the gathering at Standing Rock was to protest against environmental destruction, in peace and in ceremony. And for the most part, that was true. There are some things that occurred in the aftermath that were not ideal, but we all learned a whole lot from it. It really did ignite the passion for people to use their voice in their own backyards. It revived an interest, among the younger generation, to connect and protect Grandmother Earth.

It also showed that we're really riding on the edge of the extinction of the free press. As Indigenous People, we've been dealing with the United States government for generations now. We've survived time and time again. Now, that doesn't mean that we don't have people like Leonard Peltier still in prison. And it doesn't mean that there aren't a high proportion of Indigenous People in US prisons. But we've survived this government for a long, long time. Standing Rock was so important because it reignited a movement. Standing Rock was the beginning of a renaissance reclaiming our right, as Indigenous People, to speak up and be heard. Standing Rock really showed us that yes, we do have a voice. And even a very gentle and quiet voice can send waves across the world. It was the youth that really brought the movement to the forefront. They turned to elders that still knew the ceremonies. The elders still know how to call in *Spirit* and have *Spirit* present during that whole gathering.

On the purpose of spiritualism

So many non-Indigenous people are very, very interested in Native American Indigenous culture. To be more specific, they are interested in spirituality. I would encourage them to really search out who their people are. We are all carrying our ancestors' wisdom – but also their trauma - in our DNA, in our blood and in our bones.

We can make a strong connection to the world by understanding our own ancestors. You don't have to make that connection through my Native American ancestry.

The culture I grew up in, we talked about spirit all the time, it wasn't anything new. When I came into the New Age world, I saw that all these people had Native American spirit guides. I went home and asked my spiritual guides: "Why I don't have a Native American guide? How come I don't I have Chief Red Cloud as my spirit guide?" My spiritual guides told me, "It's because you call them ancestors". A light bulb went on for me.

Maybe so many non-Indigenous people have Native American guides because they're being given an opportunity to remember their connection to Grandmother Earth and to change the way they live in relationship to Grandmother Earth. I hope so. With Indigenous People, our belief is really about an innate connection with Grandmother Earth. We have this very loving and strong connection to nature and everything that makes up life. All our ceremonies revolve around the protection of sacred sites or water sources. Or just picking up your own trash, for goodness sake!

I hope these spirit guides will help people to rekindle or reconnect to Grandmother Earth. It's hardwired in all of us to protect what we love. And if we can all remember how much we love and need Grandmother Earth and all the other creatures we live with we're going to protect them.

There are some things that I took for granted growing up. I really didn't realise until I was a young adult how strong the spiritual connection is that we have to the earth. It's just your life, it's your way of being, your lifestyle. You don't question why there are ceremonies and why we call in the four directions, or why we address Grandmother Earth and Grandfather Sky. Our whole culture is based on our connection to Grandmother Earth. I took this way of life for granted.

There are many of us who do keep and nurture that connection to Grandmother Earth. Just like any other relationship, you have to pay attention to it. It is easy to take it for granted. I think what attracts people to the indigenous culture is actually a longing for belonging. A longing for connection. In order to have, to retain, to foster, and to nurture that relationship to Grandmother Earth, you have to practice and remember it every day so that it becomes your lifestyle. Your life becomes a natural way of walking this earth every single day.

On culture, language and identity

Cultural misappropriation, basically, is a nice way of saying stealing. It means the using of another culture when it's feeding your ego more than your soul. Then I think that you really have to step back and ask: "What did I just steal?"

When you are an indigenous person and you've lived that life, and you have people

Yvette Neshi Lokotz making a drum, 2011.

who are non-indigenous imitating your culture without a full understanding, it is basically like having someone come into your home uninvited. People feel that they can use ceremonies or ideas, without any of the training, without any explanation, without the foundational information and connection. It's for their ego more than it is for their soul. And so that's my two cents on cultural misappropriation. Those who are the name droppers, they're keen on the word Chief and having famous Chiefs as spirit guides. And, I will tell you there are some indigenous people who get very upset with this. I've heard it said "They've taken everything else and now they want to take our souls too. They want to take our Spirit."

What do we call ourselves? I agree it is important. Whether we call ourselves 'Native American' or 'Indigenous' or 'First Nation' is really for the benefit of the person that is non-native. And it's even a misnomer. Let's take the term 'Native American.' That is really what I would call a misnomer! America is a concept brought in from the outside. And this is why the term has become antiquated, because anybody who is born in the United States is Native American. So, the word kind of washes out the first people who were on this continent. The word, Native American, is used by a certain age group.

Now we have multiple generations from all sorts of backgrounds who have resided in the United States. For those that came from a different continent, there is this term called 'colonisers.' It is a word that describes the non-indigenous culture. In my world, the term 'Native American' doesn't really describe the Indigenous People here on Turtle Island. It really doesn't describe the original people here. And the term American Indian is especially a misnomer. This man who said he found this new world – there were people already here! And, he was lost! He thought he was in the East Indies. That's how we all got the term Indian. It really has nothing to do with the original people who were already here, nor the generations that followed.

Canada has started calling natives from Canada 'Indigenous People from Canada' and started using the words indigenous and also 'First Nation People' which I think is a bit more accurate. The truth is, we slide back and forth between the phrases depending on who we're talking to. If someone says Native American, I am not going to correct them. I've also found that it's generational. My mother who just turned 100 on Saturday, she still uses the terms American Indian or Native American. And no matter how many times I will ask her if she is referring to East Indian people or Indigenous People, she will give me this look and say, "I'm referring to our people!"

My mother was part of the mission-school generation. Mission schools were established with the sole objective of 'assimilating' indigenous children into the mainstream Euro-American settler culture; into making them less 'indigenous.' And most non-indigenous people don't realise that that's still happening to this day. Children are still being taken from their homes and placed in boarding schools to create a person who is 'whiter' in their behaviour. Some things never change, I suppose.

I think language falls short of really truly describing underlying emotions. Even when we use the word 'indigenous' we have to qualify it as 'indigenous to what continent'? There are many people who are indigenous, but indigenous to their own part of Grandmother Earth, right?

Indigenous. As a word, it's a start. It's a part of healing history. In the indigenous world, there is a belief that our culture is very much connected to our language. Our mental thoughts are shaped by our words for things, our language. So, when you lose the language, you also lose your culture. And so much has already been lost. In the last two decades we see younger people wanting to learn their indigenous language again. To reconnect to their culture and to confirm their identity.

On what home is

Our ancestors survived so that we could be here. They went through so much for us to be here and to live these lives. They went through genocide. They went through colonisation. They went through unspeakable suffering. They did what they had to do in order to survive, so that we could be here. It makes us stronger to talk about what our home means to us. It makes it more necessary to speak about Grandmother Earth.

When we're talking about our connection to the earth, we belong to her, not the other way around. Our bodies literally come from her. And our bodies return to her when our spirit is released. Our complete physicality is connected to her. Our brainwaves and energy are connected to her. She literally gives us life.

Ceremony and ritual touches that part of our brain that has an understanding beyond words. When we perform a ceremony, our brains recognise something important is happening here. It's about remaking that connection, to nature – or to all that is really. The creator, all the planets, the sun, the moon, the four directions, all the animals, all bodies of water, all things green, all those who fly, all those who swim, all those who crawl, all of creation. The entire universe.

When you do those kinds of ceremonies, we are all watching and listening, and we are also feeling our connection to each other and to the whole of creation. We're reminded that we are a member of the whole of nature. That we're not separate from nature or separate from each other. So, when you're looking at nature, and all the ecosystems that we're all a part of, and all the stars and planets, it's a very large body

that we call Grandmother Earth.

You can't take one piece out and take a look at it in isolation. An indigenous point of view is that the whole of creation is sacred. We have a commitment to respect and take care of Grandmother Earth. If we can look at her as a whole being, rather than bits and pieces, we can start to remember our connection to her. We can actually see ourselves as a whole being too, rather than bits and pieces.

Another thing is, we don't own Grandmother Earth. If she decided that she was done with the human race, it would be so easy for her to shake us off her body. We have such a loving and complicated relationship with her. We are literally one of her children. How does a parent teach a child? First the parent explains and shows the child why they should or shouldn't do something. But after that, the parent shows the child consequences. I think we're being shown consequences. And so, for those of us that are aware, we need to be able to use our voices in some way. We need to say let's act now. Let's listen to this. Even to do something small like go out and actually pick up some trash and show that to other people on social media. Take your children with you to pick up the trash.

You know some people think that it's so overwhelming. What can I do? But everything that we do affects someone else. We're so interconnected. Start locally, start in your own backyard. What are you doing to affect your own home? What are you doing to teach those around you? And you know, if tending a garden or picking up some trash is the extent of what you can do to help, well then that's fine. At least you're doing something. There are others who can take on a more regional or international role because they're meant to.

How are we planting our garden, how are we tending it? We live in a world of duality. When you see the really negative and the very low vibrational side of it, try to navigate your way to the opposite. Because there is an opposite. So where is that? Go there, put your energy in there.

With thanks

I can't tell you how much I've appreciated this opportunity to be with you and to express my heart. We're all a part of the same universe. And so thank you all. In Potawatomi, Thank you is *Kttche Megwech*, which is a very large thank you. *Igwien* is a more formal thank-you that we reserve for elders and for special occasions.

I want to tell you: Igwien.

Chapter 7
On Ethics

In this chapter, Ajay Rastogi welcomes Dr John Hausdoerffer from Western Colorado University in Gunnison, USA, to the Foundation for the Contemplation of Nature headquarters in the village of Majkhali, Uttarakhand, India. Both Ajay and Dr John (as his students call him) are part of a growing movement in the field of ethics. They are seeking a new kind of ethics that views all places as part of our home, all beings and generations as our scope of responsibility and all actions as potential expressions of human care for the world.

Each year, Ajay and Dr John lead students on an experiential mountain-resilient leadership course, designed by Ajay and Dr John's former student Brandon McNamara. The course is part of a longer-term Sister Cities programme between the city of Gunnison and the village of Majkhali, an initiative that aims to share climate-change solutions between the two mountain communities and co-create a place-based transformative Master of Arts course that is transferable and scalable.

Ajay Rastogi

Ajay Rastogi, Majkhali, India, 2018.

Hi, my name is Ajay Rastogi, and I live in the state of Uttarakhand, India, which is in the central Himalayan region. It's a very beautiful place with majestic mountain views; we can see the goddess mountain Nanda Devi as we speak. Twelve years ago, I came to live in my village here and co-founded the Foundation for the Contemplation of Nature with a friend of mine, Ravi Kumar, who has been working with the National Outdoor Leadership School in the US for the past 25 years.

"There are villages in the hills that can be role models of sustainability. In our village, Majkhali, you can see how people have tried to live in harmonious co-existence with their natural surroundings for a very long time."

My motivation for moving back to the hills was to find tools for transformation, especially regarding our attitude towards the environment. I wanted to find a way to motivate the radical transformation needed to save and share the resources on our home planet. I believe this needs a substantial change in inner motivation, allowing us to adjust our behaviour and design new types of social systems.

There are villages in the hills that can be role models for sustainability. In our village, Majkhali, you can see how people have tried to live in harmonious co-existence with their natural surroundings for a very long time. Despite the influence of the outside world, cultural events and festivals revolve around natural events such as the

harvesting of major crops, the onset of spring in the mountains, or days dedicated to honouring cows and bulls, or hand tools, all the things we need to sustain ourselves. The appropriate use of landscape resources is regulated by socio-religious norms. This is a kind of place-based ethics that many traditional societies and indigenous communities practice across the globe. I believe that this knowledge and these practices need to complement formal education to drive a change in mindset that will create resilient leaders in all walks of life.

Ajay Rastogi arriving at Pandukholi ashram gate, Dunagiri, Kumaon Himalayas, Uttarakhand, October 2019. Photo by Emma Brophy.

Working with the farmers – our homestay mums

To set up a residential programme for school and university students, we worked with the women in Majkhali village who are custodians of the land and holders of local indigenous knowledge. Dr John Hausdoerffer and his student Brandon McNamara from Western Colorado University helped shape this course to match university requirements. The course is called Mountain Resiliency Leadership and, each year, a group of students comes from the States to experience life in Majkhali village for this four week-long course. All the students are assigned a homestay family. They help these agrarian families with all the daily work that they do, and the students become close to their homestay families very quickly. The students learn about how

life in the village is interconnected with the value of protecting everything around them, including other people in the community and the resources they get from the landscape. It is hands-on learning, so the students get a chance to try everything, from taking care of the family cow, to getting its fodder from the forest, to fetching drinking water from the springs or tending the crops and preparing meals.

"All the students are assigned a homestay family. They help these agrarian families with all the daily work that they do, and the students become close to their homestay families very quickly."

The programme is based on three pillars. One is called 'the dignity of physical work,' because working with your hands is important for wellbeing on so many levels. The second is called 'interdependence,' because sometimes we lose sight of how much we need other people in order to survive. The third pillar of learning is called 'interconnectedness' which is more about our connection with the landscape and the elements – where water comes from, and so on. It is also about knowing that this does not happen by itself: there are trees and there is filtration; there is soil that absorbs and stores the water, it is not as if these resources come out of thin air. They need to be protected and nurtured. After so many years of running this experiential programme with the homestay families, we have a really well-structured programme. Many other institutions such as National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS). Where there be Dragons, based in the US, have brought students to participate in these programmes.

John Hausdoerffer

My name's John Hausdoerffer. I'm the Dean of the School of Environment and Sustainability at Western Colorado University, and the founder of the Mountain Resilience Coalition, co-founder of the Resilience Studies Coalition, and a humble and honoured friend of Ajay Rastogi's through our Sister City partnership between Gunnison, Colorado and Majkhali, India.

Defining ethics

John – For me, ethics are our capacity to question, analyse, and evaluate moral claims. It is about questioning whether or not we want to live our lives based on society's notions of right and wrong or challenge those notions and create new visions of how to

Dr John Hausdoerffer during the water station construction at Majkhali in June 2018, a Sister City initiative.

live. Ethics are different from morals. Morals are constructs that we receive from society – from elders, from family, from law, from religion, from popular culture, from literature and from philosophy. Morals are external claims about right and wrong. In an outer or external sense, ethics are about how we know what is 'good for the world' beyond what is just 'good for me.' The main question of ethics is: how do we measure right and wrong beyond what's right for me?

But ethics go beyond questioning external moral constructs from society. Ethics are also about internal resilience and the question: what is the good life? To me, questions about the climate crisis, social justice and deep ecology re-enliven these ancient questions. What is right and wrong when seen from the perspective of the work that sustains us? What is the 'good life' when considered from the perspective of what is both 'good for me' and 'good' in terms of our impacts across species, cultures, and generations? In other words, what does a good life mean when seen from the point of view of social and ecological systems? We are part of these systems, they are our home, and we need them in order to survive.

Ethics have become really complex in the context of a global society whose systems are driving – and entangled in – climate chaos. Ethics has a wider scope, such as considering how driving to the corner store to get a gallon of milk might affect farmers on the other side of the world. Old questions are more complicated in a global, industrial economy, where wider injustices can emerge from the most innocuous local behaviour.

"Old questions are more complicated in a global, industrial economy, where wider injustices can emerge from the most innocuous local behaviour."

Dr John's daughter learning to harvest barley with a wooden hand tool, in Golfa village, 2018.

Ajay – For several decades we spoke a lot about the north-south divide, the temperate or tropical regions or the underdeveloped versus the developed world. These divisions are no longer clear-cut. There is no longer a distinctive north-south divide. There is south in the north and there is a north in the south. Every community seems to be fractured. We have highly multicultural societies that are evolving and by that, I mean multi-class societies with multi social-equity divides and multi-access divides. This means access to basic amenities, access to information and the internet, access to opportunities and access to food.

On the one hand, we see that the world is being destroyed, biological diversity is being destroyed, the oceans are being destroyed. And on the other hand, we feel there is a crisis of development because people do not have enough food. This looks like a highly complex scenario that cannot be dealt with solely through technological solutions. We need to intervene but, to do that, we need a certain kind of a transformation, a radical change in the way we look around. Our social and economic structures need to be challenged along with our notions of development.

If the rich – who are so much fewer in number – consume 90% of the world's resources and produce such destruction, how do we learn resilience for our entire society? How can we increase equity and ecological security? This is not just about systems-change or outer resilience. It's about our inner resilience and ability to change our mindset, so people with affluence are able to share with others.

"We have highly multicultural societies that are evolving, and by that, I mean multi-class societies with multi social-equity divides and multi-access divides. This means access to basic amenities, access to information and the internet, access to opportunities and access to food."

Defining a capacity to care

John – If we reduce the objectives of solving the climate crisis to carbon emissions, we reduce climate actions to technological strategies for shrinking these emissions. With such a reductive approach, we lose out on a world-historical opportunity for growth in ourselves. We lose an opportunity to evolve as individuals and as a civilisation. Ecological science emerged over the course of the 20th century; aspects of ecology specifically emerged from western science, but the holistic and systems-approach of ecology revives core principles of traditional ecological knowledge. This blending, or what Potawatami scientist Robin Kimmerer calls the 'braiding' of science and

indigenous knowledge, offers a shared view of humans as part of the world rather than conquerors of it. It offers a practice for growing the human capacity to care for complex relationships. This braiding is a spiritual gift to the human experience, allowing us to perceive and care for complexity in new ways. This braiding is also a material gift to the human future, allowing us to build resilience into the systems that allow us to thrive.

> **"If we reduce the objectives of solving the climate crisis to carbon emissions, we reduce climate actions to technological strategies for shrinking these emissions. With such a reductive approach, we lose out on a world-historical opportunity for growth in ourselves. We lose an opportunity to evolve as individuals and as a civilisation."**

As exciting as that opportunity is, I worry that when we reduce socio-ecological problems to material-resource issues – such as tons of carbon in the atmosphere – we lose out on the opportunity for inner growth, such as expanding our capacity to perceive and care for complexity in a new way. To me, conservation issues are really about the growth of the human spirit as much as they are about deforestation or loss of snowpack. The human capacity to care for the environment has been reduced to seeing the value of the natural world as a set of quantifiable resources. This viewpoint reduces our role in the world to 'doing less bad' rather than evolving as multi-faceted, perceptive, loving beings.

I think that the moment we're in is a great opportunity to work across cultures, to grow our capacity to care. If we just frame it around carbon emission reduction by 2050, we've lost the deep ecology moment that we're in.

The middle-class American desire for greatness

John – Arne Naess reminded us to make a distinction between bigness and greatness, and I would ask us to make the same distinction between smallness and greatness. It's nice to humble ourselves, but think of the uninspiring language that is often used: 'Shrink your carbon footprint', 'Reduce, Reuse, Recycle' or 'Leave no trace.' Those are great daily, tactical, material practices for a more resilient world, but as a rhetorical strategy, they lack a new story that will appeal to our deeper humanity. We're not inspired to make ourselves smaller. We want the greatness that Naess was talking about, but greatness doesn't need to mean bigness in terms of our global impact.

Greatness can be about a great capacity to care for each other, a great understanding of ecological complexity. Greatness can be a great and compassionate global community.

The alternative to big is not just a shrinking of ourselves. Ajay was sharing with our students the story of Lakshmi, who represents eight kinds of wealth. Wealth in the context of Lakshmi means prosperity, fertility, good fortune or good luck, good health, knowledge, strength, progeny and power. We can think about richness in many ways. We are also looking at the Natural Capitals framework: social capital, human capital, cultural capital, intellectual capital, natural capital. These are more relevant ways to think about wealth and value. Some of those forms of wealth (such as natural, social or intellectual capital) can be grown in a way that awakens the best in the human spirit, growing our inner and outer resilience.

A Sister Cities meeting with guests from Gunnison at the Vrikshalaya Centre, The Foundation for the Contemplation of Nature, Majkhali, India, 2018.

"We want the greatness that Naess was talking about, but greatness doesn't need to mean bigness in terms of our global impact. Greatness can be about a great capacity to care for each other, a great understanding of ecological complexity. Greatness can be a great and compassionate global community."

A new context for old questions

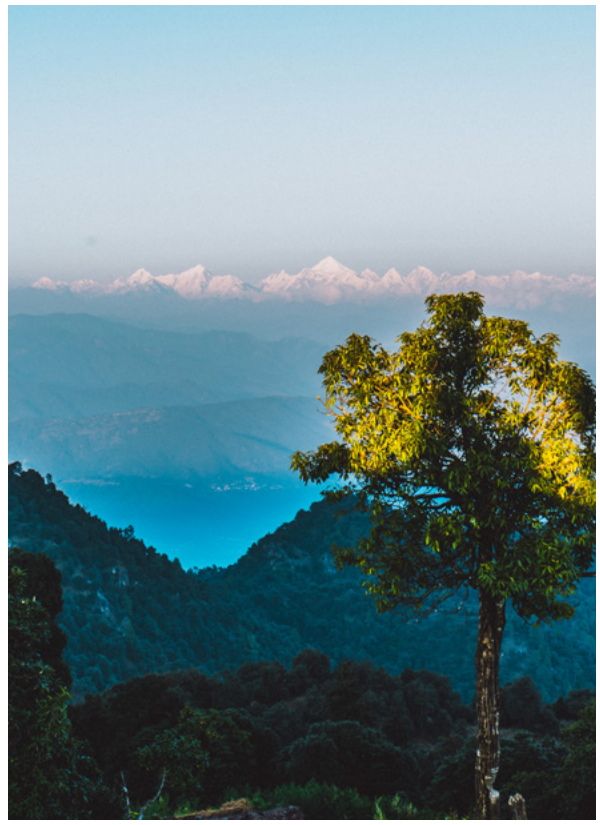
John – One of the things Ajay and I were talking about yesterday, while looking out at the Himalayas, was how some of the questions emerging from the climate crisis and

global-equity crisis are actually very old questions, like the old Hindu challenge to seek the many kinds of wealth of Lakshmi. We asked the students if they were comforted or disheartened by the fact that these are old questions. The students were concerned that the internal desire and greed that continue to drive behaviour both destabilise us inside and create injustice in the world outside. But they were encouraged by the fact that they are not alone – as a culture or a generation or an era – in worrying about these things.

“In this Himalayan Mountain Resilience course, we’re trying to find that sweet spot where you get both inner and outer resilience as the core of ethics in the Anthropocene.”

The relationship between inner and outer resilience is at the core of ethics. How is an outer resilience movement – for example, the quest for sustainable agriculture or water conservation or renewable energy – sustained by a kind of inner resilience? And how does our inner being find fulfilment and satisfaction from such outer resilience efforts? If we do not mutually reinforce both, we will fail. I know plenty of American organic farmers or environmental non-profit workers who have burned out. Environmental non-profits have a high turnover. They work hard doing external resilience work but collapse from a lack of inner resilience. In this Himalayan Mountain Resilience course, we’re trying to find that sweet spot where you get both inner and outer resilience as the core of ethics in the Anthropocene.

View from Kukuchina campsite, Kumaon Himalayas, Uttarakhand, India. October 2019. Photo by Emma Brophy.



View from Kausani, looking at the Panchachuli, the five peaks mountain, Kumaon Himalayas, Uttarakhand. October 24, 2019. Photo by Emma Brophy.

Ajay – Inner resilience is not about sacrificing oneself for others; it is love for oneself and care of self. Wellbeing is often rooted in the motivation to connect with nature, with our biological and agricultural roots. A big trait of the Anthropocene is the departure from how we used to live as a community, and with the land, to a very competitive and individualistic way of being away from the land. Anxiety and even greed keep us on our toes to focus on goals and values that are often mere endorsements of our success by others and may be peripheral to our real happiness. It is possible to become more introspective and adapt our lives towards the simplicity of being connected with those around us, of being part of the community and land, wherever we are. Being part of a community means sharing and co-creating happiness together. This type of happiness is radically more beneficial for us, for nature and for generations to come.

“Being part of a community means sharing and co-creating happiness together. This type of happiness is radically more beneficial for us, for nature and for generations to come.”

Defining resilience

John – I hesitate to offer a simple definition of resilience because resilience emerges from so many cultures and time periods. It manifests itself in so many different ways. In Western scientific discourse, I think it starts with the American conservationist Aldo Leopold. He did not even use the word ‘resilience’ but talked about the health of land and the capacity for self-renewal. Self-renewal is at the core of resilience, it’s the ability to adapt to shock or disturbance.

Before ecology, we saw the word resilience used in psychology, looking at how people responded to trauma and whether they grew through healing or collapsed due to effects of trauma. But in ecology, Buzz Holling first used the word in 1973 and shook up ecology and the sciences by talking about the capacity to persist. For him, it was no longer just about maintaining nature’s equilibrium and how an ecosystem reaches a sort of climax status or natural balance. For Holling, there is an adaptive cycle that requires disturbance, and resilience is about the capacity for a system to absorb and adapt to disturbance and then thrive on the other side of it. Take a low intensity forest fire, for example. It clears out excess organic matter to allow for the understory to regrow and the forest to thrive.

By the 21st century, Brian Walker and David Salt had built on Hollings’ notion of the importance of disturbance. They started using that phrase in their definition, saying that resilience is the capacity of a system to absorb disturbance. But the real

turning point came in an essay by Carl Folke, in 2010. He talked about the capacity to create a fundamentally new system. For Folke, transformational change is the very definition of resilience. Resilience became the capacity to create a new system, literally transforming our political systems around capping carbon or a carbon tax, or disrupting campaign finance so that oil and gas companies no longer have as much power. Folke also focussed on building awareness into our citizenry. He says that transformational change often involves shifts in perception and meaning, social-network configurations, patterns of interactions among actors, including leadership and political power relationships. Resilience is about the active and democratic co-creation of economic, social, political, and environmental justice.

I was lucky enough to talk with Vandana Shiva about this. In 2018, I asked her: "What's your definition of resilience?" And she said: "Dealing with illusions is the resilience of our time." So I think about that arc: from Leopold's capacity for self-renewal, to Holling bringing disturbance into how we understand ecological systems, to Folke talking about transformational change, to Shiva concentrating resilience down to whether or not we can deal with illusions. And I think those illusions are outer and inner. The illusions can be the way in which companies have spent billions of dollars to get people to doubt climate scientists, but illusions can also be internal. The illusion of the separate, individualistic self being fulfilled by consumption; that illusion is also obstructing resilience. The illusion that we are not part of one global community together, the illusion that we are most human when we are in competition with each other, rather than striving together.

View from Birchuwa Khatta, Kumaon Himalayas, Uttarakhand, India, October 2019. Photo by Emma Brophy.

Students from Western Colorado University around the fire at the Vrikshalaya centre, October 2019. Photo by Emma Brophy.

How outer resilience drives inner resilience

John – How do we renew ourselves when we work together to renew our own inner and outer resilience? Arne Ness talks about self-realisation. First, we must intellectually 'realise' that our selves are bigger than just our minds, especially the individual ego. Our larger self – our being – extends out into our body and through our breath into the air; into trees that transform our breath into oxygen and across that whole cycle of animals, plants, soils and living systems the oxygen enlivens.

Naess knew that even a river was literally an extension of his self. He was arrested protesting a dam as an extension of fighting for his self. And for Naess, realisation is also about how to make something real. So, you real-ise your full potential by fighting for that river. Because the river and all the inner and outer things connected by your breath are, in fact, your self – what Thich Nhat Hahn calls your inter-being – you self-realise your own self-actualisation or potential by liberating your larger self from your ego.

Self-realisation merges inner and outer resilience. Naess's chaining himself to a dam was his way of realising his potential. Not so long ago, in the United States, the actors Ted Danson and Jane Fonda were handcuffed and arrested for protesting climate change. Ted Danson said: "Being handcuffed focussed me." He was energised from that focus. It's like Thoreau saying: "Under a government which imprisons any unjustly, the true place for a just man is also in prison, the only house in a slave State in which a free man can abide with honour." It focussed him in civil disobedience. That is inner resilience.

On the Mountain Resiliency course

Ajay – In 2016, we developed a collaboration with Western Colorado University and graduate student Brandon McNamara. Brandon visited us and together we designed a three-credit university course which is now called the Mountain Resiliency Leadership course. Students have been coming to take the month-long course, based in Majkhali village, with Dr John and other staff. We also have customised courses for other universities, which could last anywhere between a week or ten days to two-to-three weeks. The Mountain Resiliency Leadership module is getting a lot of attention in terms of the transformation it brings about in the students.

This is a place-based learning course, based on those three pillars of dignity: physical work, interdependence and interconnectedness. We encourage the students

Hema shows a visiting student how to plant a seedling, Majkhali, India, 2019.

to interact with people in the community who understand those themes, so the students have a chance to experience the meaning of these pillars first-hand. So, for example, one theme in the Mountain Resilience course is place-based learning at a local co-operative, which is part of the five forms of capital in the Natural Capitals Framework. How do the students come to understand that it is not just economic or financial capital that is important, but that an enterprise should also build ecological, social, natural and human capital? For that, we go to a local co-operative, which has two thousand women as members, and we learn from them.

Similarly, another theme is lifestyle thinking. Lifestyle is about a sense of purpose; how we define 'the good life' and what is important to how we want to live. What is happiness? What are the sources of happiness? Is it just about acquiring material things and consumption? Or is it about social connectedness and what we do with our time? Is it about how we relate to each other and what we view as trusted relationships?

"What is happiness? What are the sources of happiness? Is it just about acquiring material things and consumption?"

For interconnectedness, we think about how much we need from the landscape around us and how we maintain reciprocity and equilibrium with the resources that we get from nature. So, it is also about traditional ecological knowledge around agriculture, forestry use, livestock, water-management and so on. Water is a very big issue in mountain areas, it is connected from the watershed, down to the spring, and to people's kitchens. So how do we take care of water? What are the traditional norms for taking care of water? The forests in the catchment of water springs are considered to be sacred. These customs are created and built into society for a reason – they help us to practice rejuvenative water use. So that's how the place-based learning module has been evolving.

A very important aspect of the course is a trek. We have just got back from this walking journey where we pass through villages and talk to people about how they manage their livelihoods. We have circle time and we also have our own discussions.

Bells, 2019. Photo by Emma Brophy.

Students get to experience different kinds of agriculture, different utilisation of the forests and different communities. It's also intergenerational learning because they meet people their own age as well as talking to elders.

I think students are able to grasp the social complexity, ecological complexity and cultural complexity. They understand the concerns of the local youth as well. Young people in the hills have their own aspirations. Resilience is not just about carbon, it's a whole lot of a complex scenarios we all face in society. We talk about definitions of inner and outer resilience so we can understand possible scenarios of intervention. What is my responsibility? How do I accept my privileges? What can I do as a responsible citizen? This is where inner resilience plays a big part.

"We talk about definitions of inner and outer resilience so we can understand possible scenarios of intervention. What is my responsibility? How do I accept my privileges? What can I do as a responsible citizen? This is where inner resilience plays a big part."

Diwali and notions of wealth

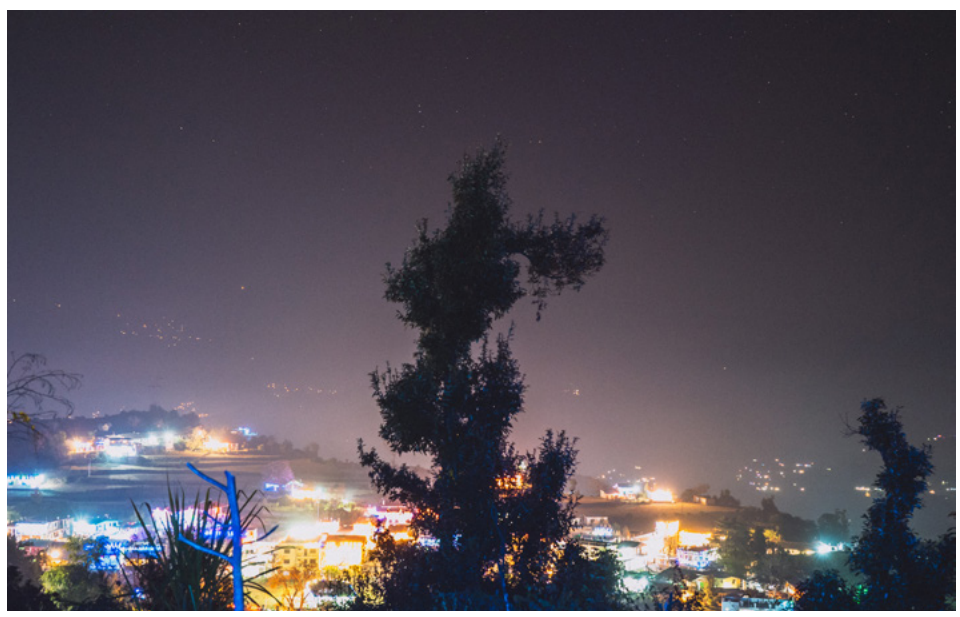
Ajay – Traditional festivals all have their lessons, and at the moment we are celebrating Diwali. The students take part in the village festivities and we discuss what the festival of Diwali teaches us. One is the concept of wealth, because during Diwali, local people offer prayers to the goddess of wealth, Lakshmi. Wealth is not just about money – it is about liberation, food security and also courage; the courage to behave responsibly. We need courage and it is a kind of wealth. Wealth is also about being able to follow the path of resilience, and escape from suffering. We need to give up certain things and take up other things to make adjustments. Our mountain resilience course is a beautiful course in that students are able to experience a different culture and learn things that they will then take back into their everyday lives.

Sister City partnerships

John – My worry was that American students would simply swoop into the community in which they were guests, attempt inappropriate solutions and swoop out without a proper needs-assessment, and without humbly co-creating solutions with community

leaders. To address that, we've created a Sister City international partnership between Gunnison City Council in Colorado and the Majkhali leaders here, so there is a continuity between each year's course, and we can learn and apply mountain solutions together over many years. Beyond that, we plan for a graduate student to live all year round in Majkhali, keeping the mountain conversation alive when the Mountain Resilience course is not taking place.

"Our mountain resilience course is a beautiful course in that students are able to experience a different culture and learn things that they will then take back into their everyday lives."



Diwali festival night at Majkhali, Kumaon Himalayas, Uttarakhand, India. October 28th, 2019. Photo by Emma Brophy.

Project-based courses at Western Colorado University

Brandon McNamara designed this course, with Ajay, as part of his master's degree. When I created the master's in Environmental Management programme at Western, I did away with the traditional thesis to connect students with visionary but overextended organisations. The degree requires a year-long project with an organisation. Five years later, we're sending twenty-five thousand student-project hours around the world. This helps to extend reach for organisations and creates real-world effects. We'll have a thousand projects completed by 2035. Students playfully create solutions. The United Nations Mountain Partnership has connected my students with similar project-driven programmes around the world.

On inner and outer resilience

John – I'd like to expand on inner and outer resilience. Ajay was talking about water, and one of the aspects we share with our sister-city communities is water. We both

Mountain Resilience Students leaving for a eight-day trek to meet other mountain communities, 2019. Photo by Emma Brophy.

are on the edge of major mountain ranges and rely on the snowpack for things that range from spiritual fulfilment to economic need, forest health, eco-tourism potential and family traditions. Devon Pena writes brilliantly about a community in San Luis, Colorado around Culebra Peak, a fourteen-thousand-foot (four-thousand-metre) peak. The snowpack of that mountain is necessary for the two-hundred-year-old food system that feeds the town of San Luis. It's a traditional Hispanos farming community that brings gravity-fed water to the fields by using a system of ditches. The water is managed democratically, and the water democracy and ditch-network expand the local riparian ecosystem and habitat.

"We're sending twenty-five thousand student-project hours around the world. This helps to extend reach for organisations and creates real-world effects. We'll have a thousand projects completed by 2035."

Practicing yoga at camp, 2019. Photo by Emma Brophy.

The wonder of this system lies in the way in which that the community produces their livelihood and sense of cultural identity through the renewal of the ecosystem. This is an example, in the modern era, of social livelihood resulting in more biodiversity rather than less. We need to share a new story of human communities as co-creators of social ecological renewal. Recently, the whole system has been disrupted by logging companies who have tried to clear cut the mountain. These clear cuts speed up snowmelt and threaten the growing season of this traditional food system, and also disrupt the riparian ecosystem that relies on the farmers. The movements there have been really resilient, though. Farmers armed and chained themselves to a gate together with Earth First activists. Those two groups care about those trees for different reasons. But there is something resilient in their shared activism.

Using that as a vision of what is possible, it shows that to have external or outer resilience in the world, we need to connect everything that comes together in San Luis: social resilience, democratic distribution of resources, traditional food practices and the activism and emotional resilience of its youth to stay and fight for a place and keep that knowledge and practice alive. Many of the youth of that community are leaving for economic opportunities in Colorado Springs and Denver. It is a lack of deep connection to place among the youth – a lack of inner resilience – that can cause the collapse of a community's outer resilience. We don't have a next generation that feels spiritually fulfilled doing the hard work of managing community food systems. The whole network can suddenly collapse – the expanded riparian system, the food system, the culture, the people who protect that forest and the amount of snow on that mountain.

This is happening all over the world. On our trek to the Himalayas, community elders talked about losing youth to the pursuit of economic dreams in Delhi. Now, the ancient stone walls are starting to crumble because the youth are leaving. Italian mountain communities that I visited this year were giving away old houses for a dollar in the hope of enticing the youth to stay. How to build inner resilience in the youth, cultivating their spiritual fulfilment by connecting them to a place so that their commitment to cultural, social, and ecological resilience follows?

Ajay – It is a very big question. We need to keep youth connected to the beauty of a place and the wisdom of the past while offering an appealing and inspiring vision of the

future. It is not easy. They need to have local opportunities to be creative and explore their interests. It is also rooted in the fact that we need to change attitudes to what is seen as respectable or desirable in society. This has changed with globalisation. In the area where we are now, it started with the policies of the British Commonwealth and another big change has come about is in the past 25 years, since the advent of television and the internet. What we are seeing now is that educated youths seek employment in the cities while the rest of the family remains here. The lands stays fertile and traditions continue; the festivals continue, and the deities and sacred sites remain tended. But if whole families start to migrate away, who will keep those lands productive?

“How to build inner resilience in the youth, cultivating their spiritual fulfilment by connecting them to a place so that their commitment to cultural, social, and ecological resilience follows?”

Students from Western Colorado University on the Mountain Resiliency Leadership Course trek enjoying the sunset in the Kumaon Himalayas, Uttarakhand, India, October 2019. Photo by Emma Brophy.

We need to have diverse livelihoods to keep rural areas attractive. Food systems used to be kind of the central pivot for these societies; most of the festivities, ceremonies and connectedness with the landscape centred around the food systems. So economics may seem to be at the root of bringing about change and creating sustainable livelihoods, but it is also about the identity of places. I think those are the bigger connections that build communities that are not just about neighbours, but also

about the trees and forests, the water, air and mountains. We have to see this place as belonging to this century and not being backwards or backwards-looking. We can do this by attracting a new generation of architects, designers, artists and technologists.

John – We ended our trek by visiting Ajay's friend Dheeraj who runs a company called B2R. It's an IT company dedicated to keeping the youth in this region in the Himalayan foothills. The company has clients in the cities, such as banks and other industries, and it works with mass data-analysis and IT support. And they take incredible pride in being participants in a global conversation from their little mountain town.

Dheeraj said that as proud as he is of what the company has achieved, he really wants the young people who work there to be able to transition into having a more holistic connection with place. The company has been around for 10 years and half the battle has been to keep young people in the town. Young people need to see the value of life in that town. How can they make mountain-life whole, rather than making it feel like a mini Delhi? I think the dignity of mountain work must merge with bringing opportunities to mountain communities, and it is that bridge we have to explore.

"We need to keep youth connected to the beauty of a place and the wisdom of the past while offering an appealing and inspiring vision of the future. It is not easy."

Trekking in the forest, in the foothills of the Himalayas, 2019. Photo by Emma Brody.

On renewal

John – When we talk about renewal, we're talking about anything from an ecosystems' capacity to renew, to the cultural identity of a place renewing itself, to an individual's spiritual renewal in the face of a collapse of a way of life. In the Himalayan region, the old infrastructure for renewal – the connection between cultural, social and ecological systems – is still there. In much of the United States and elsewhere, that fabric has long been eroded and is now being rebuilt. We're seeing a revival of markets; we're seeing a lot of backyard gardens and new locally connected cultures and initiatives starting up in the face of an economic downturn.

There's an inspirational place in Chicago called Eden Place, where the predominantly African American south-side community faced

huge challenges including lead-contaminated soil. They renewed the land by cleaning up the soil, restoring urban prairie and forest and opening community gardens but it was not just about a renewal of lead-contaminated soil – it was a renewal of the spirit of a people historically traumatised by the land. Renewal from cultural trauma merging with a renewal from ecological collapse
sparks the kind of spiritual renewal that exemplifies the intersection of inner and outer resilience.

Contemplating nature in Majkhali village, 2019.

The scholar and activist Vandana Shiva talks about the 'living energies' that are still embedded in the infrastructures of rural India, while fossil-fuel driven infrastructures are making rapid inroads. With them come food systems reliant on pesticides, tractors and highways; automobiles and more fossil-fuel reliant industry. For Shiva, living energies are still here: the energy of the cow, the compost, the energy of shared networks of labour, the energy of the sun and the rain. Those living energies are very much still in place. Her concern is that if we shift fully into a fossil-fuel infrastructure – or fossil fuel culture – a lot of carbon will be released into the atmosphere and there will be a loss of renewal. People being displaced from their farms in India has led to a quarter of million farmer suicides in the past 20 years;

that is the complete opposite of renewal.

Brandon McNamara, our colleague who helped develop this course, has added another form of capital to the Natural Capital Framework, and that is spiritual capital. That is not about a specific religion, it's about being more than a consumer in a global economy. Inner resilience is not taught enough. We have enough doom and gloom about the depredation of the Ganges, the loss of glaciers and that kind of fear and grief is not a sustainable catalyst for change in global systems and behaviours. Instead, we have to start talking about what are we going to gain, what is our vision? And if we see inner and outer resilience as interconnected and reciprocal, we can start living more mindfully and co-create new local futures. We can start to have fun being creative on behalf of the people, places and beings of this planet.

Brandon McNamara, 2020.

"Brandon McNamara, our colleague who helped develop this course, has added another form of capital to the Natural Capital Framework, and that is spiritual capital. That is not about a specific religion, it's about being more than a consumer in a global economy."

Chapter 8
On Knowledge

There is much in the natural world that we are gradually forgetting, day after day. This includes the interconnectedness of life and knowledge systems within the landscape. Close to 80% of food diversity is on the brink of extinction, and the food cultures and crafts used in everyday life are also disappearing. Change must come both from above, at a policy level, and from below at a grassroots level. We have to change our food systems and change our mindset.

Biodiversity is a celebration of life. Every seed, recipe, meal and gathering is a story about what it means to be human. The gap between producers and consumers has become so large that we are more separated from each other and the natural world than ever before. There is also a disconnect between our values and how society is constructed. Given the choice, most of us would choose sustainable livelihoods. Most of us do not want the food we eat or the things we buy to be produced by people who are struggling to survive.

What kind of systems need to be put in place so that diversity can flourish? With climate change, there is the additional pressure to design resilience into our systems and cultures: the clock is ticking. But we have the answers. There is innate knowledge of resilience in the systems we have had for thousands of years. These can lead the way, but not in a nostalgic or reactionary way. Equity and deep ecological democracy have to be at the heart of change.

Varieties of crops which have survived thousands of years of evolution in particular landscapes will be the truly resilient species; these crops are connected to our nutrition, cultural heritage and regional identities. This chapter features two people who have dedicated their lives to enabling marginalised communities to protect their own resilience. Their grassroots networking and lobbying for policy change have been internationally recognised for championing issues of food and nutrition security, climate change, sustainable livelihoods and integrating people's knowledge into bioregional development.

Nadia Bergamini works at Bioversity International. She also runs an organic, biodynamic farm with her husband, in the countryside near Rome. At Bioversity International, Nadia collaborates with the Satoyama Initiative, helping communities all over the world develop strategies to strengthen social and ecological resilience and maintain the diversity of the landscapes' agroecosystems, species and varieties.

Reetu Sogani is a women's rights activist who works on strengthening and evolving cultural and biological diversity and integrating this into practices and policies. She works on food and nutrition security and building climate resilience in remote areas of Himalayas and other parts of India. Reetu has addressed the International Women's Earth and Climate Summit in New York as one of 100 global leaders from across the world.

Nadia and Reetu's work speak volumes about a clear vision of the future. Progressive and forward-thinking, their work empowers men and women to become stewards of the soil and community through civic engagement and knowledge sharing. Their vision is not a utopian dream; even in this industrial and globalised, age, more than 70% of food production comes from small producers. The problem is that instead of having access to markets individually, these producers are forced into supplying large corporations.

If we are lucky, we eat three meals a day, and the food for those meals is provided by invisible farmers. We should remember them at each meal – that is the level of respect the small farmer deserves.

Nadia Bergamini

Nadia selling her organic produce at a local market, 2019.

CGIAR (the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research) is a partnership between 15 different research centres that work for a food-secure future. Each of these 15 centres collaborate with hundreds of partners across the globe.

Bioversity International's vision is to have an agricultural biodiversity that nourishes people and sustains the planet. When we talk about agriculture biodiversity, we mean the diversity of crops and all their wild relatives; surrounding trees, animals, pollinators, insects, all the species that contribute to agricultural production, right down to the microbes.

On biodiversity

There's a lot of diversity within an ecosystem. We look at diversity from a species and a genetic point of view. Our mission is to deliver the scientific evidence, management practices, and policy options that should be used to safeguard agriculture and tree biodiversity in order to attain sustainable global food and nutrition security.

Basically, we work with partners in a lot of different countries around the world. We work mostly with low-income countries where agriculture and tree biodiversity can contribute to improved nutrition, livelihoods, resilience and productivity and help us adapt to climate change. Usually these low-income countries are also the countries where we can still find most of the agricultural and tree biodiversity.

Since December 2018, we have been collaborating with the Centre for Tropical Agriculture which is based in Cali in Colombia. We have signed a memorandum of

Landscape in Cuchillas del Toa Man and the Biosphere Reserve, Cuba. Photo by Frederik van Oudenhoven.

understanding to create an alliance as both the CGIAR centers have a very similar agenda and mandates and one organisation complements the work of the other.

The 'Mro' communities' women are harvesting nuts at the banks of the Matamuhuri river, Bangladesh. Photo by Md. Akhlas Uddin.

The importance of staple foods

The global population is growing, and it is predicted that, by 2050, there will be nine billion people or more on the planet. This means that food availability needs to expand, especially in developing countries. We are facing a lot of issues, including the challenge to reduce global malnutrition and to adapt to climate change. As we increase productivity, we also need to reduce risk and address shrinking food diversity which is happening all over the world. We also need to drastically reduce the negative impacts of agricultural production on natural ecosystems.

"We are convinced that safeguarding agricultural and tree biodiversity can help meet all these challenges: climate change, shrinking biodiversity and increased productivity."

At Bioversity International we think food production needs to focus on a diverse range of nutritious foods that come from highly biodiverse systems. It is better to increase the production in these types of systems rather than increase the volume of a few staple grains. At the moment, 50% of the world's energy intake comes from a few grains and we are heavily reliant on rice, wheat and maize. We are convinced that safeguarding agricultural and tree biodiversity can help meet all these challenges:

climate change, shrinking biodiversity and increased productivity.

We know that small farming households have always used agriculture and tree biodiversity to diversify their diets, to manage pests and disease and to survive weather-related stress. The problem is that policymakers and researchers have never considered these types of approaches to be economically viable when it comes to feeding larger populations. Research has never really been focussed in this direction, but recent scientific evidence has shown that agriculture and tree biodiversity, used in combination with novel technology and novel approaches, has a lot to offer when addressing these challenges.

Smaller scale farming is also gaining increasing recognition as a credible tool to achieve the global sustainable development goals, which we're all working towards.

Desh Ratna Dangi is lead farmer and former treasurer of the Barpipal Saving and Credit Cooperative Limited, which is situated in the Doti, a hilly district of Nepal. She produces seasonal as well as off-season vegetables inside the plastic tunnel greenhouse to support her family, earning an average of US$200 per season. She cultivates tomatoes and cucumbers and sells produce nearby. Photo by Aakash Koirala.

Small-scale production and diversified crops

We work with agricultural biodiversity, so we promote small-scale production that is highly diverse. This applies not only to the number of species cultivated, but to the number of varieties of the same species. For example, we work a lot with the farmers in Africa who cultivate beans and we have seen that cultivating different varieties of beans on the same field can reduce the impact of pests and diseases. We are also promoting genetically diverse systems because they are more adapted to climate change; there's a much better chance that we'll find the right varieties to perform well in different environmental conditions.

Farmers at the Field Day, Ethiopia, when farmers from around the Amhara region came to learn about durum wheat diversity trials.

On the importance of millet

We work with universities and research institutes preparing curricula on agro-biodiversity. For example, we have a big programme on neglected and under-utilised species. Millet is one of these species. We show farmers the advantages they can gain from cultivating minor species which have been proved to be better adapted to marginal environments. We have been working with minor millets in some areas of India that are facing a lot of heat and drought problems. Some of these minor millets are well suited to these environments; they can thrive under low input and stressful growing conditions that limit the productivity of many staple crops. They are also highly nutritious and contribute to healthier diets.

Under-utilised types of millet have a lot of potential for development for use in consumer products such as biscuits and cakes. We engage with local private sector companies and try to find ways of making crops like millet more attractive to younger people. We work locally, creating new recipes and ways of presenting millet in cookies and other foods. It is really important to conserve these neglected and under-utilised species because they are connected with the local culture and traditions. We know that by strengthening the use of different species we are also strengthening local identities and empowering marginalised communities.

Farmers rest in a field in Colomi, Bolivia.
Photo Bioversity International /P. Bordoni.

“We know that by strengthening the use of different species we are also strengthening local identities and empowering marginalised communities.”

On local culture and women

We have a programme on gender that tries to identify the different roles that men and women play within the agricultural sector, especially in low-income countries. We have seen that women play a very important role in managing farms, even though they are usually excluded from decision making. Women have more control over what to cultivate in what they call 'home gardens' – they have knowledge about how to select different varieties of medicinal plants or those used for making condiments and preserves, and this contributes to the health and nutrition of the whole household.

Women are involved in selecting seeds as they are the ones who prepare the food. They know what different crops need to have in order to thrive; they know which beans cook in less time, or which taste better for which dishes. They also know the importance of different varieties for specific traditions, rituals and festivals. The role of women is really very important in maintaining cultural identities and this is, in turn, connected to maintaining the biodiversity of crops and ensuring the health and wellbeing of the whole community.

"The role of women is really very important in maintaining cultural identities and this is, in turn, connected to maintaining the biodiversity of crops and ensuring the nutrition of the whole community."

From recipes to registries

We have been working on the connection between traditional recipes and biodiversity. The situation in Syria is so dramatic and terrible, it is a really extreme example of how a situation can impact traditional knowledge and biodiversity. Local knowledge of plants and crops is being lost all over the world because of war, but also because of globalisation. Local knowledge is something we need to document and conserve so we can share it with the younger generation.

We have programmes working with schoolchildren: for example, creating school gardens where children can have direct experience of growing vegetables, or setting up drawing competitions on agricultural biodiversity. We encourage communities to document their local diversity and traditional knowledge, and many communities do this by keeping a biodiversity registry where they note down all the diversity in their community, all the different crops, what they use them for, how they are managed on farms and so on. The Community Biodiversity Registry is a process by which communities seek to protect resources and associated knowledge through some method of documentation.

It is very important to keep all this information available at a community level so it can be passed on to younger generations. Migration to cities is a huge problem when

it comes to loss of knowledge; young people want to leave the agricultural life and work in the cities. Alongside agrobiodiversity registries, we also work with seasonal calendars. Seasonal calendars are used to identify the effects of climate change on seasonal patterns and agricultural activities. The communities are asked to list the main seasons, what activities are carried out each month (such as harvesting specific crops or gathering wild plants), how the timing of seasons, weather events or activities have changed, and how they are adapting to these changes.

We try to get community members write their own recipe books and have worked a lot in Central Asia, producing booklets of all the different recipes. We have also done this in Cuba, where people in the cities do not know the traditional Cuban recipes anymore. It is a way of keeping this knowledge alive but also of maintaining the demand for diverse ingredients from the farms and keeping diverse crops alive. Food and identity is strongly connected to local economy.

A birds'-eye view of a colourful market.

On global networks

Anyone who is interested in agrobiodiversity can link to the Platform for Agrobiodiversity Research, hosted by Bioversity International, and add any type of information that they would like to share with other people. It is a truly global network. Obviously, language can be a barrier – we tend to stick to English, French and Spanish. Internet access is, of course, another barrier. We did have a small programme connecting rural and urban people and looking at the creation of urban vegetable gardens. A lot of the time we are trying to link the rural sector with the urban ones so there is a mechanism or infrastructure that will allow products from the agricultural sector in rural areas to reach people in the cities.

Cuba has a food supply-chain problem that is basically the result of a lack of transport. Farmers often rely on government co-operatives to collect their produce,

but not all their products are requested by the co-ops and transported into town. A lot of the fruit that is produced, for example, is wasted because there is no market with the government co-operatives and no way for the farmers to find a market in the cities for themselves.

To try to solve this issue we have worked with the Urban, Suburban and Family Farming Programme which is very strong in Cuba. Together we try to create local farmers' markets that are supplied directly by the farmers. It is working quite well because people in the cities are actually very interested in fresh produce, and they want different kinds of varieties that they are not used to being able to get in the cities.

Durum wheat varieties growing in trial plots in Amhara Region, Ethiopia. They are being tested by farmers to see how they perform under the changing climatic conditions.

Living on a farm

In fact, I have a farm myself. My husband is a farmer and we have an organic farm not very far from where I work. We have been cultivating vegetables for about 15 years and have seen a lot of changes in the climate in a short period of time. What we find now is that it's really difficult to predict what's going to happen; we really do not know if we can plant our crops because we might have a cold spell, or we might have a lot of rain, or it might even be very hot and dry. The only way to overcome these problems is to have a bigger array of crops. If we cultivate different types of tomatoes that are resistant to different biotic and abiotic stresses, then we have a better chance of picking some of the tomatoes at the end of the season.

This is the only way we can actually go. In Italy, we're very fond of our food and so we still have quite a connection with the land. We have a kind of renaissance in small-scale faming as a lot of young people are going back to it, partly because it's difficult to find other jobs, and at least with farming you can always eat your own food. But there is quite a demand for fresh organic food here in Italy.

Farms in Europe are going to have to differentiate their income to remain viable. It's not only farming different types of crops but it's also transforming the crops into some kind of product or opening restaurants or offering educational activities. Schools often come to the farms for some experiential learning. The children do some work and see where their food comes from. The eco-tourism market has a certain amount of space, but I don't think everyone can go towards agro or ecotourism because it is already quite saturated. However, it is a model that can be relevant for other places.

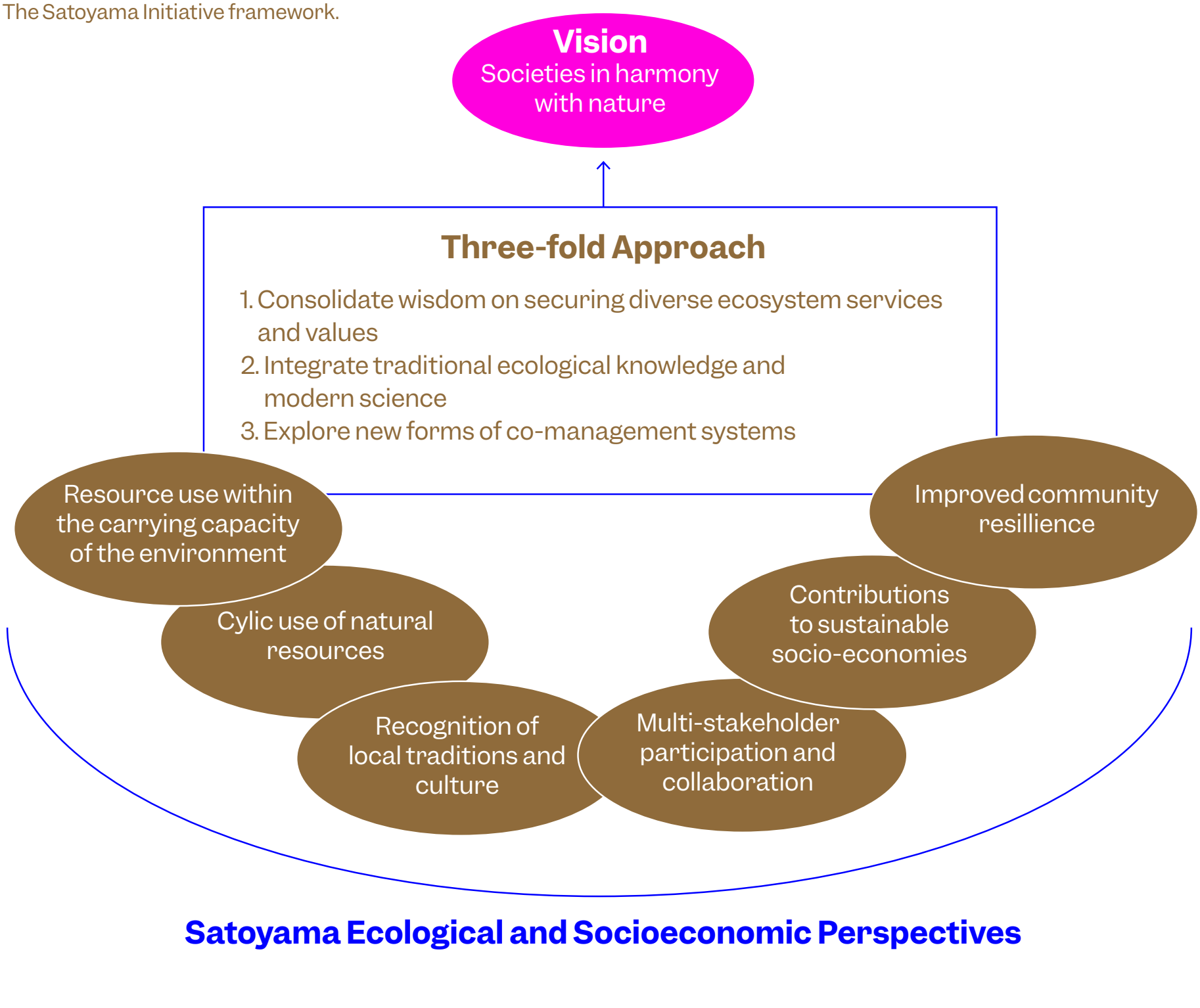
Diversification is resilience

This idea of diversification is what we also call resilience. We have been working quite a lot on this with partners around the world. One of them was the Satoyama Initiative, which is an international partnership made up of a lot of different partners from all over the world who have come together to work on what we call 'social-ecological production landscapes and seascapes'.

Humans and the landscape

The idea of conserving nature without human beings is an idea that doesn't work anymore. We have seen that all the ecosystems of the world have been altered by human beings, and a lot of these systems have evolved with human beings and have been shaped by their activities. Some have withstood the test of time, so they are still producing and still sustaining the livelihoods of the people working within them. What we, together with other partners of the Satoyama Initiative, have tried to do is to understand what has made these systems resilient over such a long period of time.

The Satoyama Initiative framework.



We have seen that resilience depends a lot on diversification, both from a social and ecological point of view. The social ecological production landscape is, in fact, a mosaic of different land uses and habitats: village farmlands, grasslands, forests, pastoral lands, coasts, etc. All these have been maintained through interactions between people and nature, in a sustainable way, for many thousands of years.

The Japanese call them Satoyama, or 'social ecological production landscapes', and there are other programmes that work with these types of systems on a landscape level. Resilience is linked to the capacity of these systems to adapt and change to changing conditions while maintaining their main functions and structure. Working with communities that live in these landscapes has taught us that agricultural biodiversity increases resilience, and that local culture and knowledge are extremely important to aiding the diversification of farming income. Climate change is making it increasingly important that communities don't depend on one sector, and diversification can happen in a number of different ways. It can involve ecotourism or artisanal work; but diversification involves finding what types of income are sustainable for the community and the environment.

Social resilience indicators

We have developed a series of socio-ecological resilience indicators to measure resilience at landscape level. This is a participatory approach and the communities themselves use the indicators to assess the resilience of their own systems.

Resilience to them might be completely different to what we expect; every community has its own worldview and their own aspirations. The nature of these indicators is more qualitative than quantitative, as many depend on the perceptions of the community doing the scoring. One indicator that comes to my mind is facilities.

From a western perspective, we look at infrastructure within the landscape and see primary facilities, such as electricity, as essential and high priority. But some of these communities are interested in very different things, and they have other primary concerns. It is interesting to see what each community sees as resilient in their systems, and then see how they want to work on their landscape to try to improve the resilience.

Resilience is the capacity to learn and adapt to changes. So a system is resilient when it is dynamic. Resilience is not about maintaining the status quo like a museum, but resilience is about dynamic systems that can learn, adapt and change over time.

The capacity to learn and to adapt to change is important, and the more diverse a system is the better the chances it has to face different changes in a sustainable way. Community-based governance is important within the system, as the equity and participation of the whole community are fundamental to preserve agrobiodiversity and natural ecosystems.

Reetu Sogani

My name is Reetu Sogani, and I have been living in the in the hills in the State of Uttarakhand in India for the past 22 years. I've been working very closely with grassroots communities here, especially women and marginalised communities. I work with them on the issue of traditional knowledge systems and practices, primarily on how to protect, conserve and strengthen traditional knowledge systems and practices which exist in the areas of agriculture, livestock-rearing, forestry, water management, and sustainable food systems. Together, we work on how we can strengthen the knowledge systems and practices, and how to promote a wider understanding that these knowledge systems are very important for sustainable livelihoods.

Reetu Sogani with 'the custodians of biodiversity' in the Himalayan foothills. Photo by Satyen.

On traditional knowledge

When we talk about traditional knowledge, it means the body of knowledge that people have been experiencing, observing, accumulating, experimenting with and sharing for centuries. This knowledge is developed in response to the needs of local, specific environments, within families, and among neighbours, relatives and neighbouring villages. It's an oral tradition which has been handed down from one generation to the next through behaviour and practices; it is not codified or documented.

For example, how do you grow food in very hilly areas that are around 1700 metres high? Local knowledge knows the kind of soil we have here, the kind of crops that can be grown, and how to manage the forest and water resources sustainably and use them in such a way that they will last for the generations to come. That is the kind of knowledge that people have about the place where they have lived for generations. Local knowledge is something that they have seen their parents or grandparents' practice; for them, it's just common sense. But without this common sense, all the connections start to unravel.

Reetu Sogani, 2019. Photo by Satyen.

“Local knowledge is something that they have seen their parents or grandparents’ practice; for them, it’s just common sense. But without this common sense, all the connections start to unravel.”

Reetu on gender roles

When I started working in the hills, in 1998, I had absolutely no idea what the situation was as far as local knowledge was concerned. I had no idea about what the gender issues were. It’s the women in the hills who have always been closely connected to the natural resources, be it the forest, agricultural practices, livestock management, health and wellbeing-related practices or knowledge of food and herbs.

“For millennia, women have passed down first-hand knowledge systems and practices relating to resilience.”

The roles of women are connected to household chores and the responsibilities of caring for their families and working close to the house. They cook, they fetch water, they farm. Agriculture in the hills is not only connected with land; it is not just about growing crops. It’s also closely connected to forest, water and livestock management and, of course, food storage, processing and preparation. They are closely connected with natural resources.

Women are the ones who know about these aspects and dimensions and how they are interconnected. Each woman interacts with them on a day-to-day basis. She knows what grows where, or what leaf should be used if the goat has indigestion. She knows how the compost is prepared and when to take it to the fields. She knows how different leaves can be used to keep the family healthy. For millennia, women have passed down first-hand knowledge systems and practices relating to resilience.

Reetu explaining 'Right to Work Act' from a gender and social inclusion perspective, 2019. Photo by Satyen.

The role of men

Men also contribute to agriculture, but usually through far fewer activities. This is the general picture. Most men prefer to leave their villages and migrate to the towns and cities. In fact, the hill economy is also called the 'money-order economy', as money is sent back to the villages as money orders or cheques. A lot of men in the hills have also joined the army, so it's up to the women to tend the landscape. One research institution came out with the fact that 98.5% of the work relating to agriculture is being carried out by women.

Women are crucial to the health of the whole household. Shown here, three generations of women in a household in Majkhali village preparing food.

Views on health

Many years ago, I asked a woman to describe what she thought the word 'health' meant and she gave me such a wise and beautiful answer. She said: "It's so difficult to describe what health is because everything around me contributes to health: the air I'm breathing, that is part of health; forest, trees, water and animals are all contributing to my health. The kind of crop that we are growing and the methods we are using are important for our health. And what I'm eating and how I'm eating it, that is also connected with our health. There is something called emotional health too."

She described health in such an integrated and holistic way. That was my first lesson. If you asked any doctor or any city person, they would say that health is the 'absence of illness'. How compartmentalised our approach has become in comparison to the thinking of people in rural areas.

"One research institution came out with the fact that 98.5% of the work relating to agriculture is being carried out by women."

On the management of change

When it comes to women, we have to work at different levels and at various policymaking levels as well. The grassroots level is very important. Women's contribution is still mostly invisible, and their voices not heard, even in local self-governance bodies. Burdened with work, the majority of women do not have the time to leave their daily chores and travel to attend meetings. It is also a question of cultural attitudes.

Women are not seen in these decision-making forums and processes, because both men and women believe they are not supposed to be there. They believe that women are supposed to be doing their household chores and looking after everyone in their family. That kind of mindset has to change, and sensitivity to gender has to come about at all levels, but especially at the household level. It's not something that is easy, but it's starting to happen.

According to studies, women do far more work in farming than both men and bullocks combined. Shown here, women transplanting rice near Majkhali village, Uttarakhand. Photo by Dhirendra Bisht.

Last year we had a meeting at the state level, where we invited government officials not just from our state but also nearby states. There were several organisations – the forestry department, the agriculture department and so on. I was so happy to see Parvati there as she is a wonderful and extremely knowledgeable farmer and, at that time, she was the headperson of a formal forest committee.

Pavarti stood in front of everybody and said: "We want to revive traditional crops and we will not use any of the chemicals or fertilisers that you people are promoting. We know from experience that these chemicals reduce our yields in the long run and are dangerous for our health and the soil. And it is expensive!"

On women farmers and land rights

One of the other major issues affecting women farmers in India is that, despite doing the majority of the work related to farming, they are not actually recognised as farmers. They're not legally, administratively or even socially recognised as farmers, simply because they don't have land in their name. It's very sad and rather ironic. If you look at Nepal and India together, women own less than 17% of the total landholdings, even though they contribute the most to the agricultural economy.

It is a tough upward struggle for women farmers because the land cannot legally be inherited by women. This has serious implications for a woman's workload, her capabilities, and her capacity for building and accessing development opportunities. It has serious consequences for the sustainable management of land for future generations.

"If you look at Nepal, India and Thailand together, women own less than 17% of the total landholdings, even though they contribute the most to the agricultural economy."

Since women are not recognised as farmers, it is men who are invited to workshops by the government or other organisations. The women farmers don't have access to the government and are not engaged in civic processes. They don't have the chance to be engaged in important decisions and don't have access to monetary credit. They don't have access to banking, credit cards or loans. The first thing a bank asks to see is that the land title is in the woman's name. With increasing migration, and reduced access to resources including land rights and credit, the situation for women has actually worsened over the years.

We have a big network here working for women farmers' rights; they are doing everything possible to try to influence the government to change the land-inheritance laws so they include women. This is an uphill battle though, and it will take many years because land is a very important source of power. In the meantime, we want women

to at least be recognised as farmers and cultivators. They should be given the right to access banks, credit facilities and other government schemes and services. These schemes should not be asking for land titles, but they should ask the name of the cultivator. I think that it should be possible in the near future.

Women taking organic biomass compost to the fields in Majkhali village, Uttarakhand. Photo by Dhirendra Bisht.

These laws in India and in every state make women's lives very difficult. With decision making vested in absent men, it becomes very difficult to take just and effective decisions at the right time. Work relating to agriculture continues to be done by women, but in the absence of appropriate decision making, the work is very difficult. It is very frustrating for women to have the responsibility but not the autonomy.

An example of an administrative and legal failure

One of the women from our area recently went to the bank open a bank account. On the form, she wrote 'farmer' for her profession. The bank clerk refused to accept it; he said: "You are not a farmer, you are a housewife." She told him: "I'm a farmer, and you have to accept that. I'm the one who is tilling the land, I'm the one who is weeding, I'm the one who is harvesting. How can you not call me a farmer? I will not delete the word farmer!" And the bank clerk had to accept it. She was only opening a bank account, but it seemed like a major achievement.

"Women take care of the health of the entire community and their environment. But their unpaid productive and reproductive work is not recognised. It is not visible. It is not acknowledged."

Sensitivity to gender still hasn't occurred at the administrative level. Woman farmers farm and carry out all the household chores and caring responsibilities at home. Women take care of the

health of the entire community and their environment. But their unpaid productive and reproductive work is not recognised. It is not visible. It is not acknowledged. In the state of Uttarakhand, widows can inherit a land title once their husbands pass away. Parvati mentioned this in her keynote speech to officials. She said: "As long as our husbands are alive, we have no land rights. Only when he passes away, only then we are allowed to have the rights over our own land." Her words really hit the audience hard. Structural changes need to be brought about. The system is responsible for this state of affairs. It is the capitalist model, and globalisation which is the root cause of this situation – land is closely connected to money.

An example of an administrative and legal failure

One of the biggest global networks working on climate change is the Climate Development Knowledge Network (CDKN). They made a film about women who are part of our grassroots group, from a place called Nai in District Nainital, Uttarakhand. The title of the film is *Missing: The forgotten women in India's climate plans.*

The women from Nai video-recorded their work to show the way they do it, how their work is connected to climate change and how it is actually helping them mitigate and adapt to changing circumstances. Women from other parts of Uttarakhand have also gone to conferences in Malaysia and Bhutan to speak about these things. Knowledge-sharing of experiences, opinions, needs and their priorities is so important. Unfortunately, as a global society, we have settled on a very myopic way of looking at things. We are losing our understanding of the interconnectedness of nature and our reliance on the natural world. And it is not about just interdependence, it's also about co-operation. People are interdependent. But more than interdependence, we must have co-operation with each other. Only co-operation across all sectors amongst villages connected by the same watershed will help increase resilience.

"People are interdependent. But more than interdependence, we must have co-operation with each other."

Traditional knowledge is not just about technique and practices. It's about a very integrated and interconnected, interdependent system which operates through people's co-operation. It is this very aspect that is actually in decline. Social cohesion means valuing reciprocity and equilibrium. Social cohesion has been an important aspect of people's lives, especially for those who are marginalised. All these values that have been a very integral part of our traditional systems and way of life, are being lost. And these values help make people and systems more resilient.

Social cohesion and food systems

In the hills, we have an age-old agricultural practice called Palta, which means that people contribute through their labour, helping each other with heavy work. For example, people from my household, my village, and other households and villages, would help each other in doing important annual tasks or dealing with an emergency, such as a forest fire.

People would devote their entire day to helping their neighbours carry out all sorts of necessary work. This would especially be of help to single women and elderly people, as well as women whose husbands and male family members have migrated. Social cohesion and all these other values do increase people's resilience. Agricultural systems have changed, and this has had a huge effect on society. When we get the food we need from the supermarket, we are less connected to our neighbours. The food system we follow makes people very individualistic and cut off from their immediate community and surroundings. We have to believe in our own resources, practices and knowledge systems again. We really need to believe we can grow our own food locally to revive and strengthen the existing biological diversity and cultural diversity – whatever little remains of it.

I would say to anyone: just start locally. Social media can be a very good medium to demonstrate that living locally is not impossible. I have seen how people in the hills have changed over the past decade. They have brought about changes in their diet, in their agricultural systems, and they have shared best practices with their neighbours. Change is possible. The experience and awareness will last a long time as it gets transferred to their children. Yes, the villagers are growing cash crops to bring in money, but they're also growing old-fashioned, traditional crops, like finger millet because they know it's nutritious and climate resilient. They are buying things from the market, but at the same time they have their own agriculture to fall back on.

"We have to believe in our own resources, practices and knowledge systems again. We really need to believe we can grow our own food locally to revive and strengthen the existing biological diversity and cultural diversity – whatever little remains of it."

Organic versus biodiversity in farming

Biodiversity-based ecological farming, or mixed-cropping systems, practised organically, is a way farmers can increase their yield. It is also an insurance against pests and changing weather. It can produce more food than chemical-intensive farming – one of the great myths of our times is that people must practice

chemical-intensive farming to feed a growing population. This is simply not true! Chemical-intensive farming and monocropping is exhaustive, whereas organic farming can be rejuvenative and more productive in the long run.

The assumptions we have about modern industrial farming are all wrong, and now we have the studies in place to prove it, we need to correct our food systems. Rather than 'organic farming', I prefer to call it biodiversity-based ecological farming, as this is farming that is in balance with nature. Organic farming can promote mono-cropping, which is happening a lot, and it's unsustainable. 'Organic' is just one component of biodiversity-based ecological farming. When it comes to chemical-intensive farming, the adverse impacts are quite well known, and even the government of Uttarakhand and other state governments do not promote chemical-intensive farming anymore, but they are promoting organic farming. They are well aware that we need to protect our soil and water, but the next step is to move from 'only organic' and to get people talking about biodiversity, and diversity-based ecological farming, in balance with the surrounding ecology, which is of utmost importance.

View of mountains from The Vrikshalaya Centre, the headquarters of the Foundation for the Contemplation of Nature, in Majkhali Village, Uttarakhand, India.

Organic farming talks about a cropping system which is basically the same system minus synthetic fertilisers and pesticides. We need to promote mixed cropping systems that take care of the health of not just the soil and environment but also the health of the livestock and of human beings, ensuring availability and access to food and nutrition all the year round.

On the nutrition, health and productivity of nine crops

In the hills, we have a practice of growing nine different kinds of crops in one single field during the rainy season. The crops we grow together to provide both calories and nutrition include grains, spices, oil seeds, pulses and vegetables including root

“In addition to the increased volume of production, the sheer amount of nutrition which comes out of one acre of biodiverse organic land is far greater to that produced by monocropping in an adjacent field.”

vegetables. In the Garhwal region, it is traditional to have 12 different crops in one field. All these different crops are grown in a single field in a single season, and they get harvested at different times of the year. This method ensures the availability of some food in the household all year round.

Studies have proved that biodiversity-based ecological farming, using organic, mixed cropping systems, takes care of health as well as production. We have studies and data to prove that production can be higher than that achieved by a monocrop in the very next field. In addition to the increased volume of production, the sheer amount of nutrition that comes out of one acre of biodiverse organic land is far greater to that produced by monocropping in an adjacent field.

Carbon mitigation of organic mixed cropping

Organic mixed cropping is able to absorb 2000 pounds of carbon in a year, in comparison to the same sized field used for chemical-intensive farming, which actually releases 300 pounds of carbon per acre, per year. This has been demonstrated by a study carried out at a university in the US. In itself, without any other considerations, this is a very good argument for changing our systems right now, in light of the climate crisis and increasing global warming.

“Agriculture is a very big contributor of carbon emissions globally, so it is important that agriculture is part of the solution to sequester carbon.”

It is important to come up with ways of achieving carbon mitigation, but nobody seems to be talking about mitigating strategies as this goes against the fiscal concerns of big corporations who use continuous growth of profit as their model. The issue of mitigation is strongly connected with fertilisers and indirectly with large seed companies. Unfortunately, nobody is interested in mitigation mechanisms right now, only in adaptation strategies. Agriculture is a very big contributor of carbon emissions globally, so it is important that agriculture is part of the solution to sequester carbon, not only to prevent its emissions but also to absorb the carbon which is in the atmosphere.

Agriculture that promotes mixed cropping, done organically, is considered to be the only way in which we can achieve carbon sequestration at a fast rate. This is in total contrast to the policies of governments which still promotes monoculture as an efficient solution. The government policies of monocropping are very similar in forestry. This only pushes the problem elsewhere. By growing only pine trees in a forest area, for example, they increase other problems. Monocropping of pine has led to forest fires among other adverse impacts on the environment. The forest department has a vested interest in using the crops for revenue generation.

I think we have to adopt a multi-pronged integrated approach to agriculture that addresses other issues, that cuts across sectors and tackles various aspects together. While numbers or statistics are important to influence policy level in certain areas, case studies are equally important.

Convincing men to change

The village women I've been working with since 2001 have already witnessed positive changes in their lives after switching to organic, biodiverse multi-cropping systems. But they had some difficulty convincing their menfolk at the household level. It has been important to get the men involved and on board and gradually we introduced the men to mentors, and they were encouraged to come to our meetings. We made them interact with farmers in nearby hill communities who had never switched over to chemical-intensive farming. We got these farmers to share their experiences with the men.

> **"Farmers are frustrated that they are not able to reach the consumer directly, but it costs a lot of money for them to set up farmers' markets and a lot depends on transportation and correct and timely communication. This struggle is still going on."**

We did workshops for them and we showed them educational documentaries. We took them out on educational trips to meet renowned people who have been working on saving seeds for many, many years. We made them interact with other groups who are also working on these issues. We even took them on a five-day hill trek through different parts of Uttarakhand, so they could see the crops being grown naturally with their own eyes and interact with different farming communities. Gradually, they gained the confidence to do what the women and all of us had been talking about.

Step by step, the men agreed to shift from chemical-intensive farming to organic farming, and from monocropping to mixed cropping. Surrounding villages then saw

their success and decided to change after having seen and heard their experiences. Gradually these smallholder farmers, who started turning to organic mixed cropping systems and growing diverse types of crops, became leaders in this process of change.

Even though the government of Uttarakhand declared itself organic many years ago, market access for organic farmers in remote areas is still very limited. Marketing infrastructure and fair terms of trade are also important, and remains a big challenge. It's not that the farmers have no idea or no awareness of the obstacles; they know that the middle person takes a major chunk of profit, while the loss is borne by the farmers. Farmers are frustrated that they are not able to reach the consumer directly, but it costs a lot of money for them to set up farmers' markets and a lot depends on transportation and correct and timely communication. This struggle is still going on.

Aggregation and reselling

In parallel, there are quite a few women's federations in the area who are selling their produce through different outlets. These federations are involved in value-addition, packaging and marketing and they sell through different outlets in the towns and cities. This is also a way forward. Value-added products can be sold through government outlets as well as some other private outlets. It is all part of diversifying income for the farmers. These marketing brands are catering to urban tastes by selling finger-millet cakes and biscuits, healthy food for children and so on. By having contemporary products made from traditional crops, and detailed information on the nutritional benefits, the farmers have a new income.

Over the past two or three years, we have seen the next generation preferring local produce to food from global corporations. There is a lot of potential to build resilience in to the communities, and to connect with urban centres for better livelihoods and new income generation opportunities. In India, we have a civil society which is quite strong, and women's groups are also very strong.

Reetu Sogani contemplating change, 2019. Photo by Satyen

New processes with the best of new and old knowledge

Self-reliance, self-confidence and self-esteem – these are all connected. When we take away people's ability to thrive, we take away their culture and their identity. We can't say that everything under the name of traditional knowledge is good. Not everything that we have inherited, which has come down the generations, is effective and worth keeping. We cannot

be so conservative as to hang on to long-held assumptions when they are not beneficial for the health and wellbeing of society. The gender issue is the most glaring example. And not all new knowledge is beneficial for the health and wellbeing of society. That we also know.

We need a good and balanced amalgamation of local knowledge with new knowledge and values. These changes need to occur at all levels. We certainly need new knowledge on how to work together and how to use technology in a smart way when needed. We need processes that allow us to regularly update and assess our way of doing things from, to address people's emerging needs and requirements. Building assessment into our own processes and systems is a very important part of resilience.

The most important thing to ask is: "Who is controlling the knowledge?" The point of control is something we must identify at each step of the way. With globalisation, there has been a gradual dependence on the market. Self-reliance and self-sustenance have been replaced with dependence and that has a direct impact on the self-confidence and self-esteem of people.

Reetu teaching a class on Mountain Resilience at the Vrikshalaya centre, headquarters of the Foundation for the Contemplation of Nature, India, 2019. The lush green plants behind are an invasive weed that locals are battling with across the Himalayan lowlands. Photo by Emma Brophy.

When we look at local knowledge and its replacement with a new set of knowledge that is developed elsewhere, we see that it results in people losing out on their self-confidence, self-esteem and self-reliance. They don't value their own practices and belief systems and their own culture anymore. And this increases the negative spiral. Who is encouraging people to lose their independence, their self-confidence and eventually their self-esteem? It could be an institution, it could be a country, it could be a civilisation, it could be a region, it could be a section of community, it could be market, or a particular section in the market, or it could be an advertising agency who wants you to look like the people they are advertising.

We lose identity. We lose our independence, we lose our language, we lose our food, we lose our knowledge systems, we lose our knowledge, we lose our practices, we lose autonomy, we lose our freedom, and, in the end, we lose ourselves completely.

Chapter 9
On Art

Art is increasingly thought of as something superfluous to the functioning of society, an added luxury rather than a source of creativity and wellbeing. But art is so much more than just the production of artefacts: it connects us as cultural beings, it moves us, it makes us think. It fills us with joy and teaches us how to use our hands, and connect to each other and our surroundings, in deeper and more meaningful ways. Somehow, the distinction of work versus leisure has shifted art from its central place in our lives. But in fact, art has always reached into every aspect of everyday life, from the food we make to the clothes we wear and the shelters we live in.

Humans have always drawn from the landscape and resources surrounding them, using art in collaborative ways. In this sense, art also creates us: it is where we feel an empathetic connection with our community at large, with those who lived before us and the generations to come. This chapter presents two Norwegian artists, Catrine Gangstø and Laila Kolostyák. Both are committed to using art to engage local communities, to create equity and identity, and to connect us to our inner and outer natural worlds.

Catrine Gangstø is the founder of the Peacepainting Foundation which runs painting workshops for children, youths and adults all over the world, including in warzones. Through her idea of painting for peace, Catrine has engaged over 3,000 workshop participants, and many more have seen it through travelling exhibitions of their work. Her methods show that painting and communication with colours can be a safe space for sharing difficult experiences and emotions, as well as a way to communicate hopes and desires for world peace.

Laila Kolostyák is a visual artist who works with snow and ice. Laila and her colleagues have engaged a whole generation of young people in creating and enjoying outdoor snow and ice experiences that culminate in the annual Borealis festival in Alta, which lies 375 kilometres north of the Arctic Circle.

Catrine Gangstø

My name is Catrine Gangstø. I grew up in the northern part of Norway and I am the founder of an organisation called Peacepainting. It's an international project promoting peace and equality through children and youth. It was founded in 2007 in Norway, but it quickly became international because we managed to get different grants to develop our way of working with children and youth from other countries.

When I was young, I had an idea that colours could be used as a language, and that is because I see colours in words. It's called synaesthesia. I see colours in words and in everything, and it wasn't until I was 30 years old that I realised this was uncommon. When I was a child, the colours I saw shaped my whole view of life. If I didn't like the colours I saw when I read or heard the name of a city, I didn't want to go there. Colours formed my antipathy and sympathy as a child and as a young woman.

Later on, I studied art history and teaching, and I also learned about different religions and beliefs. It was then that I had the idea to try to make a project for children and youths that used colours and painting as a medium for communication. I tried it out and it worked; it became a success locally and I held a lot of workshops all over Norway.

Collage of peace paintings.

This painting is called *Don't let me disappear. I am afraid without you. I love you mother.* By Mahdi Hamza, eight years old, Tunisia, 2019.

Seven human needs

At the beginning of each Peacepainting workshop, we always have inspiration time, where we talk about the seven human needs that everyone has. We connect them to colours, but at the end, we say that every colour is a part of every other colour; it is open, and you can connect the colours however you want.

The seven human needs we talk about are physical needs, emotional needs, the need to be able to concentrate so you can learn, the need for love and communication, and the need everyone has to use their imagination.

We talk a lot about imagination as everything starts there. We talk about how making things is a human need, and that can be abstract – like making a good environment or making friendships. Everyone has a need to make things. After this introduction, everyone just starts painting.

We have a simple method for starting painting. We always use wide brushes, and everyone has quite a big board to paint on, one that is about 50 by 70 centimetres. Everyone sits in front of their board. It is easier to start with a big brush, just applying colour. It's not about the details; it's about the movement and feeling.

"The seven human needs we talk about are physical needs, emotional needs, the need to be able to concentrate so you can learn, the need for love and communication, and the need everyone has to use their imagination."

Collecting the blood by a young teenage refugee in Beqaa Valley, Lebanon, on the border with Syria.

On positive emotions

We work with all ages. We have had groups with children as young as two years old, together with their parents or grandparents. We focus on children and youth. It's very nice to be a mixed group with different ages. I think it has something to do with time we spend in the very beginning to make everyone feel comfortable and equal. We focus on the nice things in life; it's a focus on the positive. Which colour do you like just now? Maybe in the evening it may be another colour. Everyone chooses a colour and talks about what they associate with that colour. It is a way to get to know to each other.

Peacepainting exhibition, Oslo, Norway, 2019.

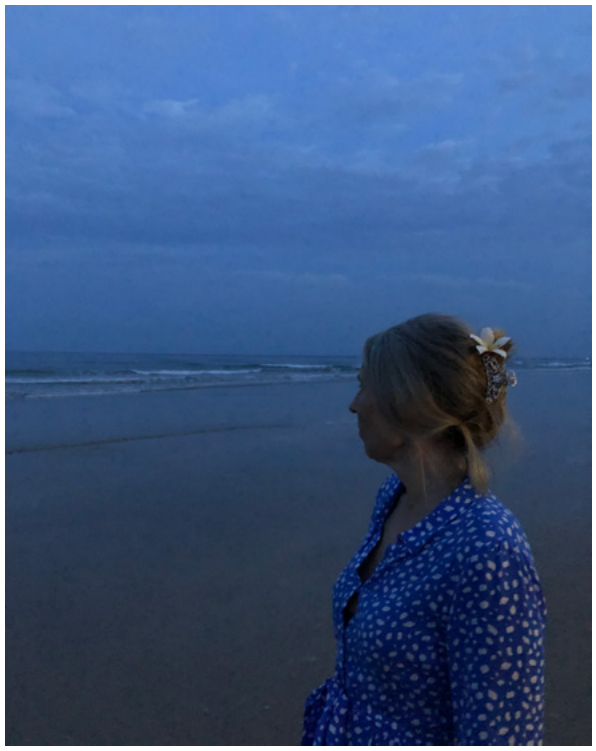
Peacepainting *Hope* by Tambi from Syria, who now lives in Norway.

On colours and memory

We connect colours to the body as well. Colours are visible light. I always ask the group: "What is it we can see when it's the sun and the rain at the same time?" And everyone says: "a rainbow". I talk about the fact that inside our bodies, we have a lot of water, right up to our shoulders. In my head, I imagine that we have a lot of beautiful rainbows in our bodies, just like the colours inside raindrops that increase when the sun comes out and makes diamonds in the trees.

Gradually, we talk more about the seven human needs we introduced during inspiration time. We connect them to colours, and to the body. Then everyone feels relaxed, and more and more people talk and share their experiences. Everyone has a lot of things to say when we talk about colours one by one. So, for instance, one child chooses a colour and then I ask, "What do you associate with this colour today?" And the child says: "This colour reminds me of the trousers my grandfather used to wear. I can see my grandfather when I look at this colour. He is not alive any longer."

So, you see, it's very personal. We share personal stories together. Everyone shares the association of the colour they choose. And, quite naturally, we have been through all human rights in that way. It's a kind of de-focussed communication. It's a very good atmosphere. I find 10 is the best number for a workshop because everyone has more time. Quite often we need a local translator, but it goes very well and it's not a big thing to translate because we are focussed on the abstract language of colours.



Catrine has a type of synaesthesia where she associates words, feelings and sounds with colours and forms.

On children's messages to the world

We have held Peacepainting workshops in refugee camps in Lebanon and other places where children have lost all their relatives to war. Children who have had these terrible experiences of losing relatives or someone who was close to them really want their paintings to go out in the world. They want the world to know about what they have experienced. So we bring their paintings out into the world by creating exhibitions. We want their messages to be seen and heard. We especially want people who are taking big decisions that will influence society to hear from children and youths all over the world.

I remember one painting: it was a really big flower and the earth was full of zigzag patterns, very hard zigzag patterns. The painting was called *To rise from the darkness*. It was easy to see that the children wanted to look forward to a better future where they could live in peace.

Peacepainting workshop with Syrian refugees in Lebanon, 2019. Shown here, *The Tree of Hope*.

On Peacepainting as therapy.

Peacepainting is a kind of therapy, but we do not focus on the therapy. Every time a picture is painted, it is a mirror and a message to the world. The workshop participants are sharing what they have inside with the group, but also with the rest of the world. Each one of them feels 'I have something important inside.' That is the purpose of the workshop, to get people to really appreciate their own inner voice.

In the workshop, we try to make the best environment to help people get in touch with their inner voice. Art is a good subject to use as

a tool. What if equality could be the normal way in acting and forming systems on the earth? It would be so interesting to see what would happen if ecology with nature, and equality of humans, became real; what would happen with the wars? It's amazing to see people all over the world and what they want to describe, which messages they want to give to each other. We have experienced a lot of different countries and cultures: Tunisia, Lebanon, North Korea, the Philippines, Sri Lanka. Poland, Russia, Portugal, Bulgaria, Finland. The things we need and feel are very similar all over the world.

"We have experienced a lot of different countries and cultures: Tunisia, Lebanon, North Korea, the Philippines, Sri Lanka. Poland, Russia, Portugal, Bulgaria, Finland. The things we need and feel are very similar all over the world."

Laila Kolostyák

My name is Laila. I'm an artist and I live in Finnmark, Northern Norway, in a little village outside Alta. At the moment, I am working with Alta City to make an ice park in the city centre. A lot of people are involved in the project, including schoolchildren up to the age of 16. Now everyone in Alta makes an ice sculpture at that age. We have people transporting the ice, builders building with the ice, and then professional artists, friends and sculptors from Russia who come and join the project. There are volunteers, new people call me and join the project every year. We have an architect's office, for example – it's just growing and growing and growing.

Together, we create a winter park each year where people can spend time outdoors. Little by little, winter tourism has become important here. Tourists sometimes ask if they can help out or participate in some way in the project. The park and the project itself have become this kind of meeting point; we start working outside in January and it's finished for the 7th of March, when we have an outdoor theatre performance. Sometimes, I don't even know how many people are working there. It is interesting how it has grown.

But the main idea when I started the project, years ago, was that Alta should be a nicer and friendlier place. The winter is really long, and I used to hate living here because it was so cold, so it's really important to have a public space that has some life in the winter.

Alta has two months of polar nights, from November until the end of January. That means it is really dark with no sunshine at all. Alta is by a fjord that's not far from the Arctic Sea and Barents Sea, so it's quite far north. We are approximately 500 kilometres above the Arctic Circle. It is only 3 hours' drive before you end up at North Cape, the end of Europe. You can't get further north in Europe. That's where we live, on the edge of Europe.

"We are approximately 500 kilometres above the Arctic Circle. It is only 3 hours' drive before you end up at North Cape, the end of Europe. You can't get further north in Europe."

Laila Kolostyák, Norway, 2019. Photo by Ali Badri.

On playing in the cold

When I was a child, I loved being outside. It was never too cold because you'd have lots of sensible clothes on, so you just enjoy being out of doors. And snow and ice have, for an artist and for a child, enormous potential for play and for fun. With ice, you can create and build really fast, really big, or you can create little things. You are using your body all the time. People ask: "Why are you doing it? Why are you working like this? You are a grown-up woman playing in the snow." But that is the only way I can live here.

I left Alta because I hated the cold, I went to Paris when I was 19 and worked as an au pair. It was 12 years before I came back to live here. First, I lived in England, then for a little bit in in the Netherlands, then in Hungary, and then I moved to Oslo and to Bergen. I went back to Lofoten after Bergen, so very slowly, I was moving back up north. But I was dreading the cold winters in Alta and longing to go away again. Then somebody asked me: "Would you like to participate in an ice-sculpting workshop?" I said no; I didn't think that ice was a serious material for an artist. But after that, I decided to go and take part anyway. They gave me these really thick clothes like the ones children wear. A one-piece jumpsuit, really thick and big. We went to this lake and there were people from the Ice Hotel in Sweden who were holding the ice course. They gave me this really sharp tool and a block of ice.

I just remember the first sound of cutting into the ice. This "shhh" sound – it was just amazing. I was hooked immediately because it had such a nice feeling. Just the

movement of the sharp tool into the ice was fascinating and then all of a sudden, the ice transformed, and it became really interesting.

From the project *Sammen* (Together) celebrating the fifth anniversary of Alta's Northern Lights Cathedral, during the Borealis festival 2018.

The material of ice

I started to look at ice differently. You can see both sides: the environment around it is reflected in the ice, all of nature is reflected in it. It is solid yet made from water. It is life. I am about 60% or 70% water; this is 100% water. So, there is not that much difference between this block of ice and me! All life is dependent on water and ice came to be the material that I think is most interesting for an artist. It is changing all the time; it can be concrete or vapour. That's why, when you put things in a deep freeze you have to cover them, otherwise they will dry out. Ice is drying out all the time. It is disappearing in front of our eyes.

Laila and students sculpting ice in Alta for the project *The Big Little*, during the Borealis festival 2020.

“I started to look at ice differently. You can see both sides: the environment around it is reflected in the ice, all of nature is reflected in it. It is solid yet made from water. It is life.”

Ice from nature

In Alta, we are fortunate that it is so cold, and we can go to a lake and take ice out from the lake. We don’t have to produce ice; nature is producing it for us. The way the ice looks depends on the temperature and the weather that winter, or that month. If you don’t take away the snow, then the snow can push the ice down into the water. It forms white ice on top.

Ice is moving all the time because there are big forces when it’s created. There are cracks and bubbles, and even things such as little fish, or leaves. The water is never the same, so the ice stores history in it. Ice from a river has a completely different quality. When you take the ice out you can see if it’s been a cold winter or if it’s been a mild winter. You can read the ice. In Greenland, researchers have extracted ice from glaciers, and they can see 1000 years back. They know what the climate was. There are stories in the ice.

“You can read the ice. In Greenland, researchers have extracted ice from glaciers, and they can see 1000 years back. They know what the climate was. There are stories in the ice.”

Exploring water at a children’s Land Art workshop called ‘Jeg fant, jeg fant’ (I found, I found), 2020. The workshop structure and name are based on an old fairy tale.

A matter of degrees

I check the temperature several times a day. I look to see if it is windy or snowing, and if it is above or below minus. I don’t want to see the red on the thermometer; I don’t want it to be warm in the winter. Since we are working outside with ice, we have to try to protect the ice from melting. Every degree makes a difference.

I remember during my childhood it was quite normal for March temperatures to be minus 10 degrees Celsius in the day and minus 20 at night. It wasn’t until April that we would head up into the mountains and go skiing because it would be too cold and too dangerous to ski very far before that. In the

spring, I'd go skiing with my parents in the mountains every weekend. When I look now, March is sometimes eight degrees Celsius, and you can have warm spells in February. Eight degrees is really warm, and to have it like that for a week is possible now. I can't remember that happening when I was young.

Since I started working with ice, I've become really sensitive to what the weather is like. I can see a mountain from my house and what I have noticed is that there are trees growing higher up. Little by little, there are new trees growing higher up on the mountain, where before there were just rocks. It must be getting warmer.

"Little by little, there are new trees growing higher up on the mountain, where before there were just rocks. It must be getting warmer."

On previous projects

In 2004, I brought 15 tons of ice to Copenhagen in what was supposed to be the coldest week. They also used to have cold winters in Copenhagen and Sami artists were invited to do something there. So, we created an ice sculpture, but it was so hot the whole time, around 12 degrees. Overnight the wind changed and shaped the ice we were working on. It was disappearing, but at the same time it was really beautiful. So, then I started to get really interested in ice melting.

I got into reading about the tundra and did a project for a festival where I brought 12 tons of ice to a district near Paris. I made an ice circle of 12 tons of ice. It was six metres in diameter, and I put earth on top, and grass on top and let it melt. It was 24 degrees Celsius on the opening night. It took a month for this ice to melt. The funny thing was that people took the grass from the top and brought it back to their gardens. I returned after a year and I could see the grass was different where the circle had been. It was like a circle of new grass.

There is always light

Once, I remember coming back from Paris just before Christmas, and my son came to meet me at the airport. We were driving home through the snow-covered landscape and there were stars and some Northern Lights. I said, "Wow, it is really light!" and he said, "Mom it's not light, it's dark. There is no sun. It's dark!" And I said, "It's really dark now in Europe, but all the snow makes it light; you can see the landscape even when it's dark."

It reminded me of my grandmother. I used to go into her house when I was little, and she would sit in complete darkness during the dark polar-winter period. I would ask my grandmother why she was sitting in the darkness and she would say, "Come and

have a look. When I'm in the darkness I can see the light and the stars outside. If I put on the lights inside, I don't see anything."

Alta and the river

The snow and ice project gives Alta an identity, especially for younger people. Now everybody expects to do an ice-sculpting course when they are 16. The high-school building department, transport department, art department; they all take part in creating the festival. They get to work with professionals on a real project.

This year we are doing a project about the river. Because it is the year of the wild salmon, I thought that it would be good to focus on the river. The river is important to all cultures, people's lives are reliant on it. We are making a big river out of ice in the park and it will represent life from the mountain plateau to the fjord. We will build an ice-skating rink and represent the history of the place; a voyage from the Sami to environmentalist demonstrations to protect the Alta river. These demonstrations happened here in the 1970s and 80s. The environmental demonstrations here were called 'Alta-aksjonen' and is an important part of our history. It lasted for five years and it was a really big battle to stop development along the river. Eventually the battle was lost, but we gained our Sami Parliament because of the activism.

"The environmental demonstrations here were called 'Alta-aksjonen' and is an important part of our history."

2019-2020 The river project and copper mining

The Norwegian government just decided to give permission to a local copper-mining company to dump its waste in the river delta. How is it possible today, with all the knowledge we have, that this can happen? Do we need this copper so badly that we cannot think carefully about how to dispose of the waste? Even if it is a bit more expensive, saving our environment should be more important.

I am hoping that this river project will get people thinking. After all these years, it's still an issue. We're still dealing with the environmental battle to protect the river delta of the Alta. Alta Aktionen happened when I was young; my father was working for an environmental organisation and he took me to all the demonstrations against building along the river.

Diversity is life

In Alta, there is a tradition of holding a big market twice a year, in November and in March, exactly when the festival takes place. Traditionally this was the time the Sami would come from the mountains and sell things. The Russians would come as well, and we would all meet and exchange goods. Today, it is exactly the same. A lot of people

come from Russia to sell their products and there are Sami people selling handicrafts, traditional clothing or local produce such as teas or dried meat. Now we even have Thai people selling freshly cooked food, and there is a guy in a van selling kebabs; I think he's from Syria.

After the meeting of the Sami, the Norwegian and then the Kven, the Finnish people came as well. The basis of the local people here has always been a mix from different backgrounds. We had this a really long time ago, and to have people from all over the world living in Alta brings more life and richness to the place. When I talk about identity, for me what's interesting is what happens now. How can we share a place? We share the cold. It doesn't matter where your father came from, if you live here, it is cold, and you have to deal with the cold. It is a special way of life that connects us all.

"We share the cold. It doesn't matter where your father came from, if you live here, it is cold, and you have to deal with the cold. It is a special way of life that connects us all."

We have been working a lot with Russian artists this year and will have Russian students coming from the art schools in Murmansk. I'm really happy about that. I think it's even more important for artists and people to connect and try to work with each other across identities.

We have to create a better future. It's not possible to close your eyes to your neighbour.

It is just not possible.

The basis of what we are doing is the cold. If it gets warmer, we can't do this snow and ice thing. It's really strange for me because, when I was young, tourists came here to see the midnight sun. There were no tourists at all in the winter period. And now it's the other way around. We have more tourists coming in the winter. I think it is partly to do with climate change. All of a sudden people are interested in the cold because Europe doesn't have any long winters anymore, so people come here to discover that.

I want Alta to be a better place than it was when I was growing up, when it was still very closed. People were sceptical of strangers; you were not supposed to talk to strangers here. But I always saw strangers as the most fascinating thing of all, I wanted to know what they were thinking and eating. I think all that is interesting, it makes life richer. We are not allowed to be as different as we really are. By everyone being different, we are the same. I really like the saying, "A stranger is only a friend that you don't know yet."

Children's Land Art workshop 'Jeg fant, jeg fant' (I found, I found), 2020.

Laila with kids making a lingonberry circle for the bears at a Land Art workshop in Finnmark, Norway, 2020.

We need to take care of the cold

For the local people snow and ice is actually a resource, it's a part of our identity and way of life. I can't imagine not having any winter. Before, I used to think: "What should I do when it's winter?" Now it's turned upside down. I think the period when you see the most people outdoors, spending time in the town centre, is during the festival when we are making snow and ice sculptures and the theatre set, or when it's the dog sled race. Winter is the one time of year when there is really a feeling of life and community. Otherwise I think it is quite dead here because people tend to stay indoors.

On teaching kids

I think the most important work is the work teachers do. Artists can also work and teach kids, but that kind of work gets very little recognition. If you are an artist doing a lot of paintings and exhibiting in galleries, then you are a great artist. But if you work with kids, or work with snow and ice, it isn't taken as seriously. I think this is why a lot of artists avoid community work and doing what I do.

"I think the most important work is the work teachers do. Artists can also work and teach kids, but that kind of work gets very little recognition."

I think it is really important for any artist to consider where they are, and to be part of the place where they are. I think that it's a duty. I feel I have a duty to give back what I've been given. If I was really realistic, I wonder if I would have started working with snow and ice or working with kids. But in my mind, you cannot be environmentalist and not think about people or children, so it is important. Also, doing it resembles play, and what is better than play?

Land art with children

In the autumn, I did a land-art project with seven-year olds. Every day, a class came to meet me at the beach area. It was autumn and the beach and forest are really beautiful at that time of year; there are a lot of old pine trees. It was interesting to see the kids play outside in the cold. I have been in France and seen small children going to the kindergartens set in concrete squares. They play outside but are dressed like little men and women in skirts and short trousers; it was like that in England too.

Then you see these Norwegian children. I think that made me really proud, because they are sensibly dressed in high boots and one-piece suits so they can sit on the ground. They all had a packed lunch and they stay outside even if it's minus four degrees and windy, or there is snow and sleet. You know, they didn't complain, they were just getting on with it, grilling sausages on the bonfire. They had all the equipment they needed, and they were all prepared and just really happy being outside.

I think the kindergarten teachers for the younger age groups are doing a great job with the kids. Actually, I've read that that French kindergartens are coming to visit kindergartens in Norway, just to see how we manage to have kids outside; even in winter, here, the kids get to play outdoors, sometimes almost all day.

The story of a bird

We had a start-up meeting for the Alta park project at the local high school, with all the builders and people from the Transport Department and so on. We invited the historian to come and talk a little bit about the history of the river. Everybody received a little rucksack with information. The historian told me something I didn't know about Elvabakken, the place I come from. It once had an even older Sami name, Sorkó. This is the name of a special bird; in Norwegian it's called Svømmesnipe. It is *Phalaropus lobatus* in latin, and Red-necked Phalarope in English.

This bird migrates to the tropics from Lapland. You don't find this bird in southern Norway or in southern Scandinavia, as it migrates between Lapland and the tropics. The funny thing about this species is that the female bird has the nice feathers; she lays eggs in different nests and leaves the upbringing of the chicks to the male birds. She is really bossy and if another bird is attacking, she is the one who defends him and the chicks. But in the end, she leaves them, all her several partners, and she goes off to the tropics again, leaving all the work with them.

So, it's a world that's just a little bit upside down. I just thought it was really funny that this bird has given its name to the place where I come from. It's very Scandinavian isn't it?

Chapter 10
On Connected Voices

In this chapter, Walid Al-Saqaf looks at some significant aspects of the effect of internet access on freedom of speech. Beyond his research and development work at Södertörn University in Sweden, Walid combines his role of free-speech advocate with that of a software developer and researcher focusing on the non-commercial use of the internet and its impact on democracy and freedom of speech. Walid founded a ground-breaking news-aggregation service in his home country of Yemen and this spurred him on to work on the tracking of internet censorship, allowing activists and journalists to bypass government-imposed firewalls to access news and social-media websites.

Walid is a member of the Board of Trustees of the Internet Society (ISOC) and co-founder of the society's Blockchain Special Interest Group. His work in tech development around increasing internet access has earned him international recognition, including a TED senior fellowship, and Örebro University's Democracy Award, and he has been featured by global media organisations such as CNN, The Guardian and The Huffington Post.

Esra'a Al Shafei is the founder of Majal (majal.org), a network of digital platforms that amplify underrepresented voices in the Middle East and North Africa. She is passionate about music as a means for social change and is the founder of Mideast Tunes, which allows musicians across the world who have Middle Eastern and North African origins to share music that is often censored on mainstream music platforms.

In 2015, the World Economic Forum listed Esra'a as one of '15 Women Changing the World', and she was featured in Forbes magazine's '30 Under 30' list of social entrepreneurs making an impact. She is also a senior TED Fellow and Echoing Green fellow. As an outspoken defender of free speech, Esra'a was one of Fast Company magazine's '100 Most Creative People in Business' and cited by The Daily Beast as one of the 17 bravest bloggers worldwide.

Walid Al Saqaf

Walid Al Saqaf. Photo courtesy of the Maharat Foundation, 2019.

I'm Walid Al Saqaf, a senior lecturer in Journalism and Media Technology at Södertörn University. I do research in internet studies and, among my areas of interest, are artificial intelligence, blockchain, the Internet of Things, big data, and social-media analysis. In the area of big data, for example, there is a lot of discussion around how to analyse the quantities of data that exist online, deriving from numerous sources. For example, with regard to social-media platforms, an area of study is network analysis, which helps us understand how people communicate with each other and what makes them attracted to certain people and types of content. This is part of the marketing, so many companies would like to analyse this massive amount of data to help them understand how to attract audiences.

There are various emerging decentralised solutions in technology, and you may have heard of blockchain, which seeks to eliminate the need to place our trust in centralised data. There has long been an issue about trust, or shall I say, distrust, in centralised media, with Facebook among the platforms that have been criticised. And then you have the issue of the politicization of online content and how certain elements such as bots and hackers can be recruited to attack individuals online.

So there is a lot going on in media-and-technology, and in cyberspace in particular, which is where I've been active. I feel that human rights have a place in this developing digital world, and within the scope of human rights, freedom of expression is an important aspect for those of us who come from the Middle East. I am originally from Yemen and, although I've been living in Sweden for a while, I am still a Middle Easterner and I try to promote freedom of expression there in any way I can. Technology in its various forms can be a supporter or helper in this space, particularly in the area of eliminating censorship. When it comes to censorship, there has been a lot happening in the last decade.

On the Arab Spring

Most of us recall what happened during the 'Arab Spring' (although some people don't like using that name for it). We had various platforms in active use as uprisings were taking place around the Middle East, including in my homeland Yemen. Much of what was published on these platforms was user generated, so it helped users who were trying to promote their ideas to get their voices out there. In countries under authoritarian rule – which includes the majority of countries in the Middle East, as well as China and others – freedom of the press has been suppressed along with free expression generally, with most of the mainstream media controlled by the state. People in those countries came to the internet and used it to promote their viewpoints, express their opinions and have things published that would not otherwise have found a platform.

During the time of the Arab Spring and even before then, I was developing a news website, or what you might call a news-aggregator website, called Yemen Portal (yemenportal.net). This collected different forms of content from Yemeni news sites and promoted them based on the topics they dealt with. For example, if there was a new incident, how did the various news sites cover it? The search engine aggregated and clustered information so people could see a mosaic of views on particular incidents. Over time, it grew to became one of the more popular websites in Yemen, and the authorities, led by President Saleh, ended up blocking it.

I remember opening the website one day to check how things were going, only to realise it has been censored and was no longer accessible in Yemen. I was told that my website posed 'a national security threat' to the country because it allowed anti-Saleh voices to be presented. Since then, I've been an anti-censorship advocate, using various tools to circumvent censorship and promote freedom of expression online. The first thing I thought was that, as the internet is not controlled by anyone, the Yemeni authorities may be able to stop individuals from accessing a domain, but they cannot stop the internet as a whole. So I started developing tools; one of them was called Alkasir, which is an Arabic word meaning 'the circumventer'. I built it so users in Yemen could have access and whoever wanted to find news-content published on my website could do it through Alkasir.

Over time, I realised this is not only a Yemeni problem, it is actually a Middle Eastern and maybe even a global problem, because many countries outside the Middle East also censor

Walid's doctoral dissertation, *Breaking Digital Firewalls. Analysing internet Censorship and Circumvention in the Arab world*, was published in 2014.

websites and some of them still do. So the tool became a hit and was used in countries such as China and Iran, and even in democratic countries like Australia and the USA, where libraries or workplaces practice a certain level of censorship.

Alkasir ended up becoming a useful tool for many individuals. Alongside working on Alkasir, I began researching and trying to understand how censorship works; what it entails, the tools used to suppress certain voices and how this is achieved. During 2011-2014, I researched online censorship and censorship circumvention, particularly in relation to digital media, using data I gathered through Alkasir. This research culminated in a PhD and I ended up publishing it as a book.

It was an eventful journey at an eventful time, but things have changed over the past few years, with the end of the Arab Spring. Most of the dreams we had, those represented by the Arab Spring, have faded away or been transformed into nightmares. In Yemen, the peaceful protests of 2011 were met by repression that eventually lead to a brutal civil war. In 2014, an attack attributed to a missile strike from a Saudi jet fighter destroyed my house in Sana'a, killing my brother-in-law and his 12-year-old daughter.

View from the balcony of Walid's apartment in Örebro, Sweden.

Much of the technology used to bypass censorship at the peak of the Arab Spring is no longer effective in many contexts, because the suppressive systems developed by authorities have also evolved. The censorship of online websites and content has developed so effectively it is clear they have their own research teams and scientists perfecting new approaches. Cyber surveillance, which has become more pervasive than ever before, is one example of these advanced methods.

From censorship to surveillance

Censorship used to be the first intention or objective of an authoritarian regime. What they've ended up doing is allowing individuals to access content but making sure that they are thoroughly monitored. Activists who get caught are then prosecuted or

penalised. People have been able to access content but have become more and more aware of the fact that they might be watched and run the risk of being targeted. That, in my view, is an even worse kind of censorship, when you know you are being tracked and that any action you take on a website – particularly if that website is known to be anti-government – exposes you to risk.

That is what drove me to consider surveillance as the second evolutionary stage of censorship, both in technical and social terms. Surveillance is more than just censorship in the technical sense, it also works internally, in the form of self-censorship. It causes people to lose trust in their own judgment about the use of technology. So it's quite a frightening scenario. I'm not sure how one can confront this as a lot of users are not media literate. If they don't know how technology operates, they may unknowingly expose their information to mass-gathering and analysis, and be taken advantage of. One cannot overstate the impact of the scandal concerning Facebook and Cambridge Analytica, which massively damaged trust in media companies and media technology in general. We have now entered into a very different arena that requires much more strategic thinking and long-term vision by researchers and activists alike.

Walid participating in InterCommunity 2016 (#ICOMM16), a global decentralised event organised on 21st September 2016 by the internet Society.

The potential of blockchain technology

There are certainly some promising technologies, with blockchain technology among the most intriguing as it eliminates the role of a central authority, what we used to call a media-technology owner. Instead of having a single individual or entity in charge of storing data, data would be stored via a distributed ledger on various servers across the world. These individual servers cannot alone control the types of content they save because it's built around a consensus mechanism. For example, in the case of Bitcoin,

which is the first blockchain, you have thousands of nodes across the globe recording the same data and ensuring that this data is protected against manipulation and malleability.

That leads us to consider blockchain technology as a way of ensuring there is no single central authority in a position of control. Another thing likely to be of value to activists is the fact that data on blockchains becomes censorship-resistant since it is no longer possible to block the database where that data is stored. This is the opposite of the traditional centralised database structures used today. Authoritarian governments may try to actively find out and shut down, or prevent access to, the various nodes of the blockchain, but that would be a very expensive procedure. Economically speaking, it would be more expensive than the value such a move would create. Hence, I think blockchain technology is of interest to activists and those involved in freedom of expression.

Walid's badge when he spoke as an internet Society Trustee at the OECD 2016 Ministerial Meeting in Cancun, Mexico.

Another aspect I think would be valuable is something we are currently researching at Södertörn: confronting fake news. The way it works is that when original content is published by, let's say, an official entity or celebrity, an original copy of it can be saved on a blockchain. It would then be possible to verify provenance as content would have to be signed for by the original creator with a private key (which is something like a digital signature). No one would be able to forge the content because it would be cryptographically signed and known to belong to a certain individual or entity. Over time, this would allow us to store records of creative content whose provenance has been fully established on a blockchain.

Developing a user case for blockchain journalism

We are trying to see if this could develop into a use-case for blockchains in journalism. If individual journalistic content is stored on a blockchain it should be possible, over time, to find out what, when and by whom content was published. At the same time, we could identify if anyone was trying to forge the content, and eliminate the possibility of fake news becoming mainstream. Social media – or any type of platform – would be able to verify and double check if the content is on a blockchain and has been signed by the originator. If not, it does not have proven authenticity. We hope to publish papers on this in future.

If you think of media as a product, then like any product it is worthless without consumers. News content has arrived at a point where there is so much distrust,

there are people who just don't believe anything anymore. Messages propagated by media in all its forms, including the extreme right- and left-wing, have ceased to be factual. That obviously leads to a cycle driven by confirmation-bias, where people only tune in to what they want to believe. Once extremely opinionated content reaches the mainstream and is perceived as factual, that is very dangerous.

Polarisation

If you confine yourself to your own bubble of information or thoughts, you may never change your mind. After all, it's unlikely you will need to change your mind if you surround yourself with similar types of content, and this is what leads to polarization. When you live in a polarised society, it leads to tension and possible violence, which is a massive threat to democracy.

In the long run, establishing better ways of verifying content would be helpful. It would help us to be objective, rather than simply asserting something is or is not true. Tools such as in digital forensics can help us uncover and identify fake images and videos. Their use would help boost media literacy among the general public, and even more importantly, among journalists who need to be trained so they understand what is objectively factual and what is an opinion. We are training students and aspiring journalists at Södertörn university to do this. We feel that education is the key to confronting the ongoing threat facing journalism as a profession and industry, and hope we can go back to the basics by verifying content before publishing.

Sunset view from Walid's apartment in Sweden.

We need to ensure journalists use verification tools and methods to reach conclusions on the validity of online content. If we can do this, journalism will perhaps survive. One reason people have lost trust in the media is that they see it as serving its own vested interests rather than those of the public. In countries such as the US, capitalist interests have led to greater polarization towards Republican right-wing media outlets, or left-leaning Democrat ones. With partisan interests involved, it is hard to believe any of it is purely there for the public good or in the public's interest; other interests end up taking precedence over professional journalistic ethics or principles.

Jeopardizing or compromising the ethical principles of journalism leads to a downgrading of the profession for everyone, even those who are honest and trying to cover facts with integrity. The decline in trust is down to private interests and while I cannot offer a solution, there are better examples to follow. For example, public broadcasting in Sweden, and Scandinavia generally, is based on fees paid directly or through the tax system.

Public TV and crowdfunded channels

The Scandinavian broadcast media proves that there is some potential to having media organisations funded directly through the government. Swedish TV and Swedish radio are said to be among those most trusted by a country's citizens. If media can be funded directly by fees paid by the public, that would help ensure journalism remained faithful to its principles and ethics.

This is certainly not possible in all countries and in some cases, one could turn to online crowdfunding initiatives of the sort used by The Intercept and The Correspondent. These start-ups are not necessarily looking for funds from every individual or the whole population, but from those who are able to afford it and who believe in the importance of reliable journalism. They can cover general news but also dig deeper into investigative stories that are of importance – such as those related to political corruption or mismanagement – and fulfil a watchdog role. The challenges are not insurmountable if people are willing to evolve and find ways to overcome them.

Net neutrality

New technologies bring new challenges and, with the internet, came the need to protect net neutrality. Net neutrality is the responsibility of internet service providers to treat content of all types equally, without privileging or giving advantages to certain types. An example is that of a provider offering one company faster speed, access and throughput so that it loads faster on your screen. This means the company is helped to promote its content over that another company – whose content may be less favourable to the internet service provider – who might be capped so their content loads more slowly.

In the long run, creating bias and favouritism will be counterproductive as the internet will no longer be an open space that everyone can contribute to and access. It will be skewed towards those who pay more or are more influential. This will fragment the internet and make it more like a series of islands than a connected global space where everyone is welcome to produce and consume. It is also an obstacle to newcomers, start-ups and smaller entities who will find themselves competing against much larger ones. That is capitalism at its worst because it makes the rich richer and the poor poorer. It creates a divide.

Limiting net neutrality is opposed by many, including, for example, the father of the internet, Vince Cerf. He adamantly opposes trying to control or govern content because the internet was built on open standards and open infrastructure, and these types of filters or controls affect its seamless design. Compromising net neutrality obviously means showing the technology as something that is not open and fair.

Concentration of power

Alongside fake news and challenges to net neutrality, another issue that leads to distrust of the internet is what we call 'concentration of power'. When we look at the internet as a whole, we see that privately-owned corporations control vast areas of it; if you examine the top domains accessed online, there are about five that receive more than 90% of the bandwidth and traffic on the public domain. This excludes what is known as the deep web, where domains are not public-facing or accessed through traditional search engines.

Companies such as Google, Facebook and Apple take up a disproportionate share of the web, and if you look into their distribution across the globe, you will notice that most of these companies are located in the Western Hemisphere, mainly in Silicon Valley. They do not represent the world in all its diversity. Smaller companies, especially non-Western countries, have difficulty competing because they lack resources and technology. In such countries, companies are left behind and those Silicon Valley companies at the forefront keep running faster so it's almost impossible for others to catch up.

TEDGlobal 2014 in Rio de Janeiro. Walid has attended many TED and TEDx conferences over the years.

This disparity is, I believe, one reason why countries such as China and Russia are already involved in building their own internets or intranets. Instead of regarding the internet as the global space, they are focussing more and more on closing the environment down and not allowing external entities to engage without permission.

Closed walls and fragmentation

China has been relatively successful in creating its own search engines and social media and Russia is to some degree following in their footsteps. While US-based conglomerates continue to dominate, this may serve as a model to other countries, eliminating any possibility of real competition. The temptation to close or confine

access to the internet in general may grow, and may encourage a rise in nationalism as people no longer communicate with others across the globe, but stay contained in their own bubbles and national boundaries. That would be network fragmentation, clear and simple. Even with the infrastructure that exists today, online fragmentation is still possible.

One can see countries are already competing in terms of how they govern their digital space. That the most extensive and the highest concentration of surveillance cameras is found in London, not Beijing, is an illustration of this. Regimes are competing to become the one that can monitor most people in the shortest period of time, using the most advanced technology.

Deep surveillance

What is a bit scary is that not all of this surveillance is transparent. The scandal over the US National Security Agency's PRISM programme, which was exposed by the Snowden revelations, has shown that much of what is happening in terms of surveillance remains underground. It is happening behind closed doors and what we get to see is just the tip of the iceberg. As we learned about it only through leaks which led to the subsequent closedown of WikiLeaks and Snowden, we should consider the likelihood that whatever governments are hoping to do next will be even much more discreet and hidden.

The race towards 5G

The kind of stealth-mode operations likely to take place in the future are likely to be worse. Add to this the challenge of having to deal with new technologies such as 5G which, as you can imagine, is one of the main conflict issues between China and the United States. All this points towards a future where there will be competition in terms of open standards or standards of technology. If the Chinese end up being the ones that set the standard for 5G for the majority of countries, that would put the US at a disadvantage. It leads to a risk of concealed proprietary software that may end up being used for the mass surveillance of people taking place not just in the hundreds of thousands, but in the billions. Hence, with faster, more efficient, effective and robust technologies emerging, there may be growing appetite among political regimes to use them for surveillance. This would, in my view, damage the trust in the internet even further.

The question of who sets the 5G technology standards is a major one, since it would lead to having an advantage in a multi-trillion-dollar industry. China has moved up over the years because it showed a slow and steady approach to growth; they didn't want to leap forward too fast and then fall back fast as well. They are taking it incrementally and working peacefully and quietly. China has now reached a tipping

Walid's own house and car in Sana'a after they were struck in July 2015 during the ongoing, devastating war in Yemen.

point and I believe that if their 5G standards are adopted globally, they might actually tip the scale and take over.

The US has been more involved in the short-term investment of selling arms and war profiteering; trying to dominate in that respect and getting big oil deals. But China has been investing long term, and very cleverly, in this technology. While it might not necessarily produce results right away, it may be wiser than domination through war. From Vietnam to the Iraq war and the ongoing conflict in Yemen, the US seems to have been eager to engage in wars. There are two mindsets at play here. I think the Chinese are winning in the long run because the US do not have the same stamina and they cannot fight wars forever. There will be a collapse of their economy if they keep on depending on the sale of weapons and on certain types of technology.

Potential for change

I do not want to leave you all with too dark an ending. The situation we have now is that all sorts of technologies, with all their negatives and positives, are merely a conduit. Eventually they are in our hands as individuals, to use them in whatever way we see fit to serve our purpose. But when you look back at history, you realise that those who pursued new technology often did so without knowing whether or not that technology would be useful in the long run.

There is this a popular saying by Roy Amara, who said that humans generally tend to underestimate the long-term impact of technology and overestimate the short-term impact – this is demonstrated by the internet. Decentralised blockchain solutions are seen as having a useful short-term impact in the way they are facilitating cash transfers in the case of Bitcoin, but the long-term impact might be much more drastic in the sense that it would facilitate some degree of decentralization of communication, as well as storage of data. It may even lead to a revolution in what is called 'smart contracts' which basically automate the execution of contracts. You can actually have a contract with all its points embedded into a particular piece of code that would be stored in a blockchain, making it permanent.

Blockchain technology is ambitious on the surface and can be used positively to make things fairer and give people get what they want without third-party meddling or intervention. But equally, their use could lead to results that are unpredictable.

Smart contracts could shrink the market for some regular jobs, which may become redundant if they can be organised automatically through code. Technology and the way we use it are evolving as shown in the extreme of rigid website blocking giving way to advanced cyber surveillance, as authoritarian regimes update their means of control. Technologists and activists will also evolve so they can stay ahead of the game. Blockchain is just one area worth experimenting with for its possibility of escaping centralised rule. We'll just have to wait and see how things turn out.

Esra'a Al Shafei

My name is Esra'a Al Shafei. I'm from Bahrain, which is where I still live, and I'm the founder and director of Majal (majal.org). Translated from Arabic or Persian, majal means 'giving away' or 'creating an opportunity' and for the past 30 years, majal.org has operated as a network of digital platforms that serve to amplify marginalised and underrepresented voices.

How it all started

Illustration for a campaign raising awareness about Kurdish human rights. Kurds have been imprisoned, murdered, displaced and violently oppressed because of their identity countless times throughout history.

When I began, back in 2006, the project was called Mideast Youth. I started it because I felt that there was a major gap in the provision for young people in the Middle East, in how we communicated with each other. Often what you saw in the blogosphere was Arabs writing primarily for Arab audiences, Kurds writing primarily for a Kurdish audience, and we were all very separated and isolated from one another. So the idea behind Mideast Youth was that we were going to have a group community, where we'd have all kinds of ethnic and religious minorities, people with all kinds of political and social beliefs sharing the platform to talk about our everyday lives.

At the very beginning, it was very difficult to attract an audience. We started working for it on a monthly basis and we had to go from one community to another, asking if

this was something people would like to be a part of. Most people were really excited because they liked the idea of sharing an environment and sharing a platform, rather than a personal site. A lot of people were already finding it an issue, to try to create an audience for a specific blog so when we combined all of these voices in one place, the traffic was tremendous. The opportunities offered by creating podcast, videos and campaigns together were a lot greater than working individually.

How we developed Mideast Youth

Mideast Youth began as a WordPress blog. At the time, we didn't have many developers and the blogging format was very restricted. I had to learn how to use WordPress themes so I could set up plug-ins. And I started moving towards an interactive format because we didn't want people to feel bored just reading words. Many people felt there were a lot of very long articles, there wasn't much in the way of interactivity, so we began to incorporate video.

We began working on animations and doing satirical videos. We started doing comics, and the comics were very popular. We were doing them in Arabic, Farsi and English, it was very satirical and people liked that – they appreciated that kind of humour. They were really excited to be a part of something different and that's how we started attracting a bigger audience, it was because it was unique, it was home-grown. And it was very easy to get other authors involved because everybody wanted to get their word out. If somebody wanted to make a podcast but they didn't know how to do it, there were always people available to help with production; this was around 2006, before Twitter and Facebook were really huge and before there were many interactive ways for people to communicate. Because to be interactive, you really needed to be a developer, to understand how to integrate videos and how to use them.

The funding was hard. I got together with another partner who was sort of volunteering his time and we started doing development work for our clients. All the money received, we put back into the website; that's really how I got the hosting funded. That's how I started getting more support with design and development to make sure that we weren't just doing everything. There were a lot of things that I wanted to do that I was not capable of developing because I simply didn't know how. So I was able, with that money, to hire people to help me build out this platform to something a lot more robust, a lot more accessible.

That's really how it took off. All the users were co-creators and I was managing the platform. I was also blogging actively but I wasn't the main blogger, there were many authors who were far more active. We also had editors and we had availability in three languages: English, Arabic and Farsi. English and Arabic were the languages most used for the region because at least 30% of our authors were Kurdish, and we had maybe

Rasha Nahas accompanied by Shaden Nahra on violin during the shooting of documentary From *Beneath the Earth,* 2017.

10% Turkish, 20% Iranian and 40% Arab. For them to communicate effectively, the common language was English, although a lot of Arabs and Kurds spoke either Farsi or Arabic as well, or Kurdish, and they were able to move from one platform to another.

We also did a lot of translations, because sometimes there would be a beautiful article written in Farsi that we wanted to make accessible to an audience around the world. This was not just a way for us to communicate with each other, but a way for the world to understand what young people in the Middle East, in all their diversity, were thinking. We were battling many different stereotypes and not just from within. Government propaganda was pitting us against each other in a very political and strategic way and we had to fight that by owning our own voices, making sure that nobody was going to hijack our narrative, and being forceful in making sure that everybody had an equal voice, regardless of race, ethnicity or religion.

That was really important. We were fighting propaganda where they say members of the Baha'i faith are spies, members of the Kurdish community are militants and terrorists. It was important that we understood where this hostility was coming from and made sure that, as young people, we didn't replicate it in each other and within our communities.

On women

The project had maybe 60% women and 40% men; we naturally attracted more women for some reason and the entire team is women now. I think women felt the responsibility to speak up, the need to speak up. There is a lot of strength and courage in women, and I think that is sometimes underestimated. We had more to prove in a way, because we were disregarded.

When I applied for jobs in the technology industry, they always said: "We only want male developers to apply." It was hurtful, obviously, but it is what made me want to pursue web development. I felt I had things to prove for myself, but also things to prove to society. It was difficult at the time for women founders to get any funding for a start-up, because most of the funding was going to male-owned businesses. Back then, the discrimination among investors was very clear. They would give away a million spread over 40 different women-led businesses, whereas it was easy for a male founder to raise 50 for one start-up. There's still a huge disparity when it comes to the way capital is spent.

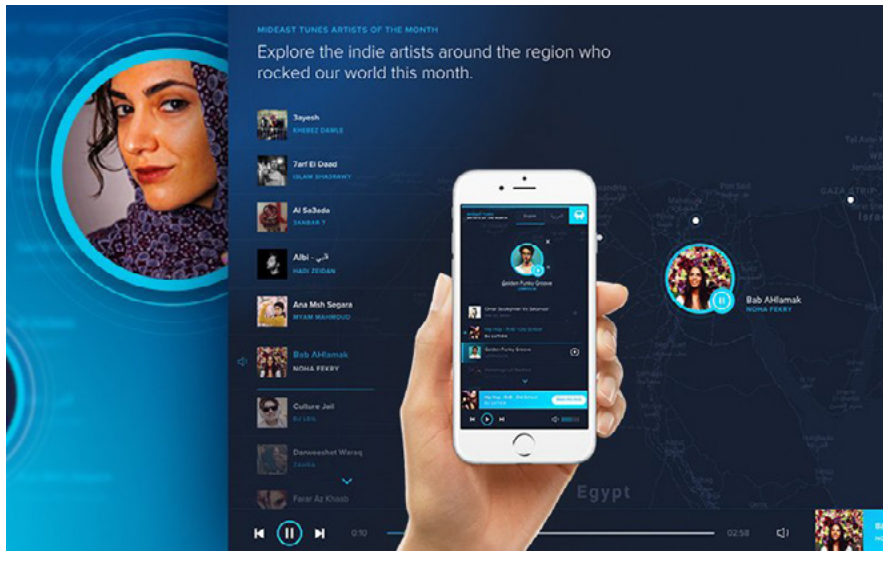
On Mideast Tunes

One of the projects I'm currently working on is called Mideast Tunes. It operates on mideastunes.com – now the largest web and mobile application for independent musicians in the Middle East and North Africa using music as a tool for self-expression and social-justice advocacy. We have over two thousand artists and we have shared more than 12,000 individually produced songs and tracks – all original. It's the largest platform for its kind in the independent space, but it still is incredibly difficult to fund it and no one really takes it seriously as a start-up. I think one of the reasons is that it is run by women.

On our 'about' page we don't say who the founders are; we don't say it's run by women. The focus is really on the artists themselves, the majority of whom are also women. We get a lot of requests but as soon as we speak with potential investors or donors in the region, they get discouraged by the fact it's founded in Bahrain, rather than a place like Dubai, and run by women, rather than the typical male founders that you usually find.

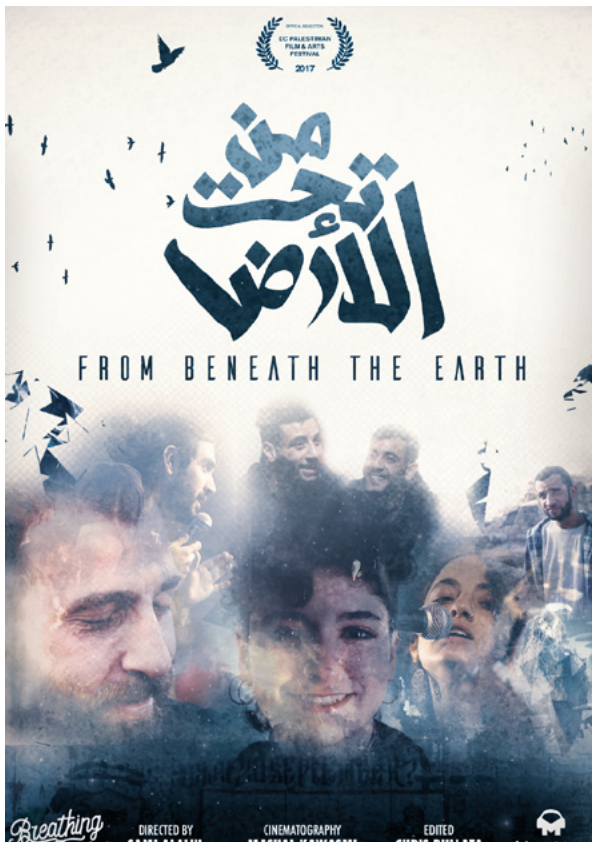
The vision for Mideast Tunes

We're very vocal about the fact that we are here to enable self-expression. We don't want to be the next Spotify and we don't want to compete in the music industry. We want to make sure music is accessible and not censored, because right now, for Spotify or Apple Music to be present in the region, they have to censor content. That means that you don't hear many songs about LGBTQ youth; you don't hear many songs about religious freedom or gender identity. This is something that is prominently available on Mideast Tunes. We are proud of hosting musicians who are rejected on other music platforms because they're too political, because they're too controversial. But for us, that's exactly why we want to make sure that their voices are heard. Because this is a way for us to bypass censorship or surveillance through creative means.



Mideast Tunes is the leading digital platform to discover underground musicians in the Middle East and North Africa and is designed to be as accessible as possible.

We have about 400,000 people who have signed up across the region, but that's not including people who stream for free, because the platform is 100% accessible. A lot of free users are in places such as Iraq or Libya, where they can't afford to pay a subscription fee. A lot of models applied by music platforms are actually completely irrelevant, because it means only privileged people with access to a credit card can listen to the music.



Poster for the documentary film Beneath the Earth, directed by Sami Alalul, 2017.

We have an offline listening model as well, where you don't have to be connected to the internet. You go in and once it loads up, that's it, you can listen offline as many times as you want. And this helps people living in places like Gaza for example. It was very important for us to look for models around 'how do we make this as accessible as possible?' We needed it to be as inviting as possible for young artists who were not yet production masters, but starting out and using music as a way to share their stories and their personal experiences. A lot of musicians talk about trauma. For example, there are bands created in refugee camps and situations where they are facing warfare, who are in conflict zones, or are dealing with the complete and utter destruction of their properties, homes and livelihoods.

They turn to music as a way to cope. In places like the Middle East and in other situations where people are faced with political and environmental instability, music becomes a way to reconnect with their past and present, and to ensure they have a hopeful future. Many of the songs are very uplifting. They are there to tell people 'don't give up – we have the right to be happy'. We have a right to live with dignity. Change will come and happiness will come, and a lot of young people hear this and are very excited, because every day they're faced with bad news: news of destruction, of poverty, and dealing with economic disasters where people are losing homes or their lives, or being imprisoned for expressing themselves. Music has really lifted a lot of people from that kind of hopelessness.

Filmmaker Sami Alalul (top right) and cinematographer Mashal Kawasmi (bottom right) on set with Maysa Daw (left) for his film *From Beneath the Earth*, which debuted at the DC Palestinian Film and Arts Festival. Photo by Leila Mawasse-Alalul, 2017.

On documentary film

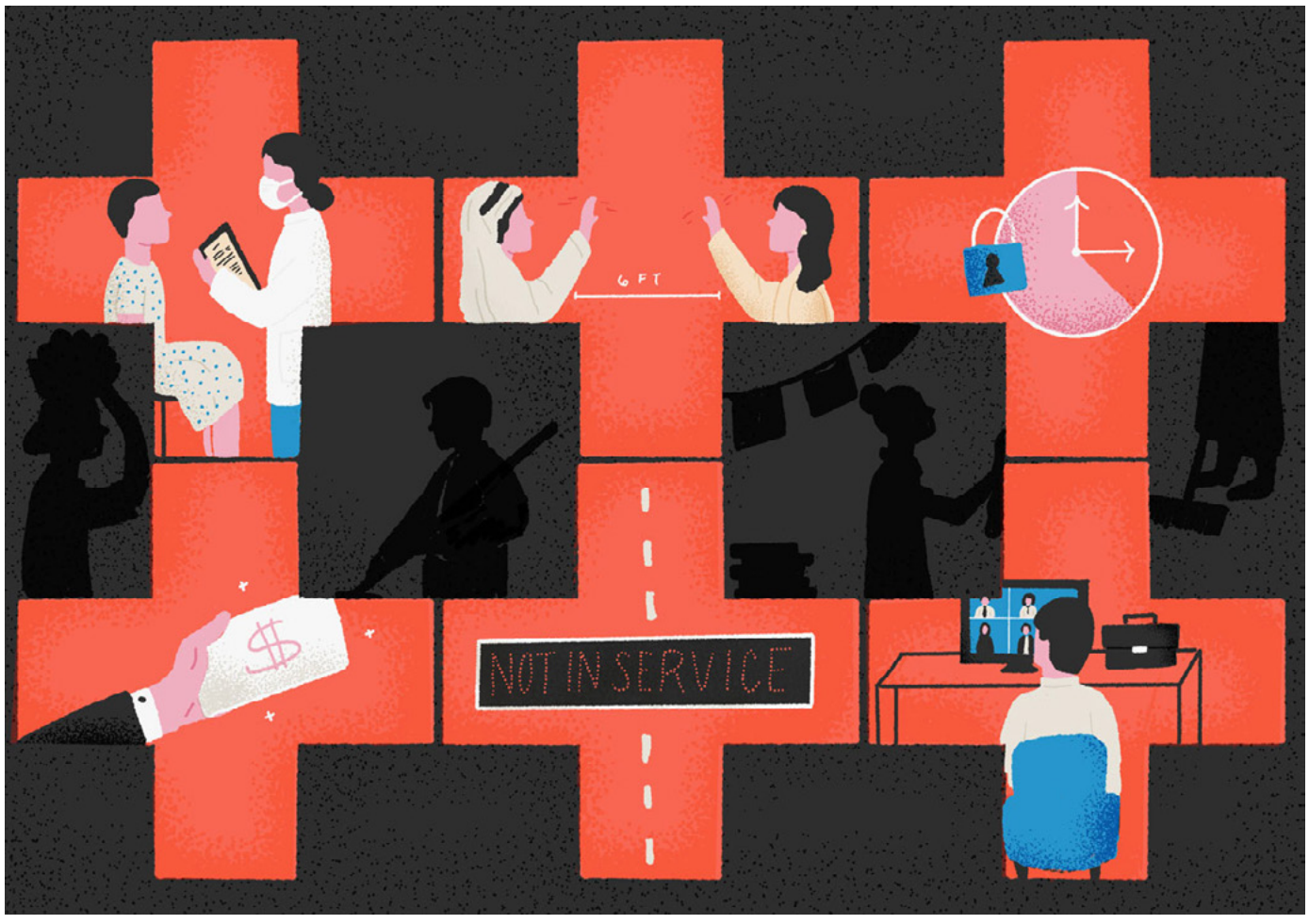
We also created a short documentary film about the intersection of music and social change in Palestine. It basically follows five musicians in their everyday journeys, showing how they turn to music as a way to cope with their everyday lives. The film is called From Beneath the Earth and the filmmaker is Sami Alalul. We've shown it at several festivals, especially those dedicated to

Palestinian cinema and film-making, and it's going to be available online soon. Right now, it's just a trailer that is available. One of the reasons it isn't fully online is that we are looking for a funder or sponsor to help us develop the page to put this into context, to do more production work so that this can actually become a series. The next ones we hope to feature are musicians in Saudi Arabia and Jordan, so we don't want just to end it there in Palestine. We want to go from country to country and show the world what young independent musicians are doing.

Please vote!

We get so upset when we see that other people have the right to vote in a genuine election and do not use that right. Because that's how you end up in bad situations. People said: "Don't worry about Trump, it doesn't concern you." Of course, it concerns us. We're thinking about a potential war in Iran. We think when people elect a president in the US, they're not just electing a president for the US, they're electing an individual that has the capability to override Congress, to override any other decisions and create a war.

The weapons industry is massive. And so you see a war in Yemen, you see a war again in Iraq, a war in Syria, and you see a continual war. I mean, it is just constantly going on, all these proxy wars. Who is paying the price for all of this? Innocent civilians. It is very upsetting when people abroad don't take the right to vote seriously, or abstain from voting, because they should understand foreign policy. How is this going to impact



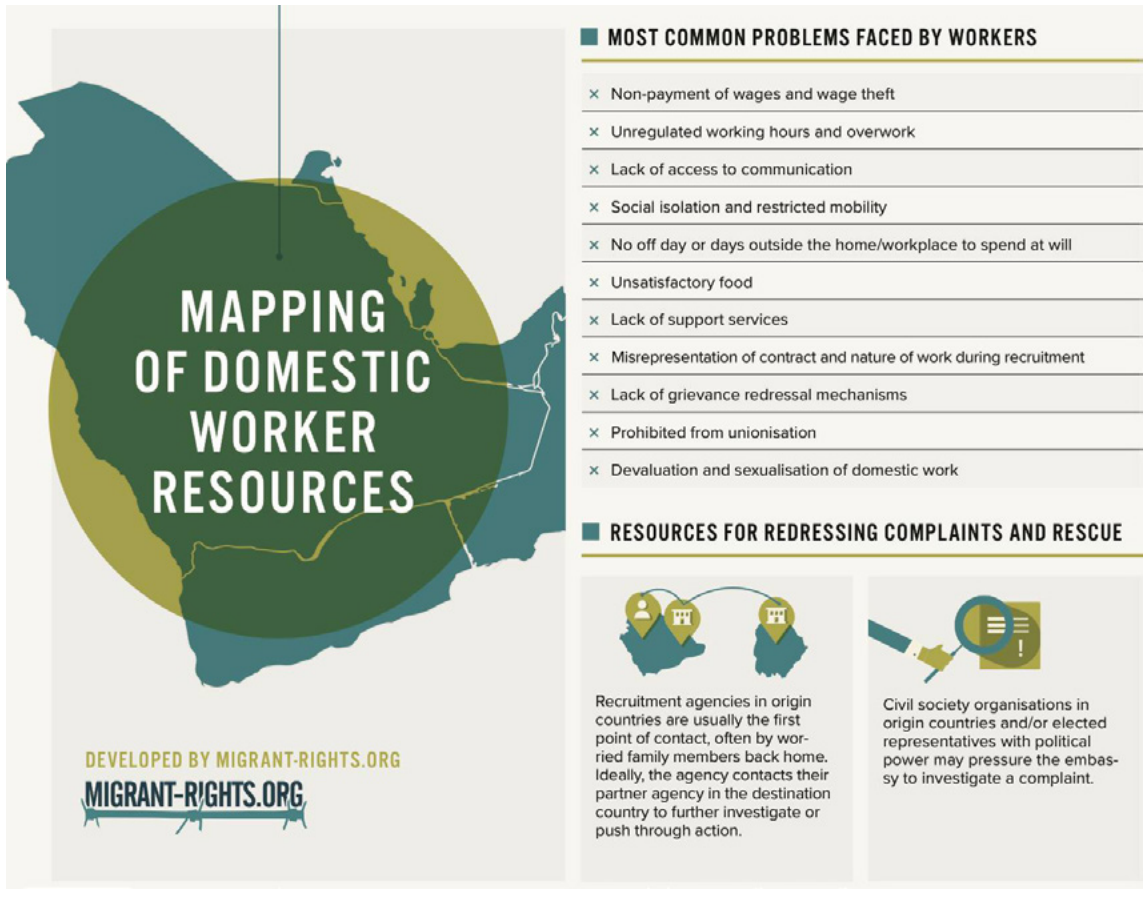
Migrant-Rights.org recognises that migrant workers are particular vulnerable at times of crisis, including the global pandemic of the COVID-19 virus.

on not just people from that country but the entire world, because security does not mean the same thing from one place to the other. I don't think future generations can ever forgive what happened because they will be the ones paying the price. We already are in some ways but I really fear for what's to come. We will leave the next generation with absolutely nothing.

On environmental issues

Young people in the Middle East are becoming more and more aware of climate change, of environmental issues. We see a lot of young people advocate against things such as plastic waste or water and air pollution. The unfortunate thing is that young people have a lot of fear and anxiety speaking about these issues because powerful corporations often receive funding and support directly from the government.
So censorship is not only for political content – political expression or debates, or religious debates – but a lot of it is also about the environment. You can't challenge a corporation or factory run by the government because it's seen as you are threatening their authority and criticizing the government – criticizing any government – for not doing enough to protect people. For those in power, that is threatening enough. And it makes it very difficult for people to feel encouraged to talk about these things.

The other issue is grants – young people do not receive grants because donors don't want to support controversial things. This way it is so unfortunate that protecting the environment is seen as controversial. It's nothing to do with regime change, it's nothing to do with dictatorships. No matter what we do, no matter what form of



Founded in 2007, migrant-rights.org is a Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)-based advocacy organisation that aims to advance the rights of migrant workers.

government we have, the environment is the only constant and it's not being respected at all. For this reason, it becomes harder for young people to take action. More and more, they are trying to figure out a way to collaborate with the government so that they are not seen as dissidents, so they're not seen as revolutionaries or rebellious because, depending on how vocal they are, they could end up paying a price for that.

We have a lot of different challenges and obstacles when it comes to who can sign up to become a legal entity. A lot of environmental entities are rejected by the government because they're not seen as necessary or regarded as a threat or contrary to what the government wants us to do. I have many friends and colleagues who started environmental entities and even consulting firms, trying to do so much around this topic but who have been rejected and had their bank accounts frozen. Oftentimes they're not able to accept grants and not able to have any sort of partnerships. The road is blocked there. I think a lot of people don't understand the challenges that come with speaking up. It's not that young people are not aware; the awareness is there, and it's becoming more and more apparent. But the issue is whether or not they have the permission to be able to do anything.

Saaleek Qalandia RC in Palestine, from the documentary *Beneath the Earth*, 2017.

A lot of young people don't want to do it with risk. They want to do it properly and they want to do it lawfully. They want to do it with the assistance of local schools. They want the assistance of government officials to make sure their speech is protected and we are able to criticise a factory for polluting our seas – it shouldn't matter who owns the factory, if it's government or not, we should have the right to criticise if it's impacting our water. Cancer rates are very huge in the Gulf region, and the level of waste is enormous. We see it in our sea and in our drinking water, the lack of filtered water which means everybody just imports water bottles and increases the toll off plastic waste. It's a disaster really.

On optimism

I have to be optimistic because optimism is what keeps you going. If you have the huge responsibility to speak up for injustice, you can't be pessimistic because otherwise, you're not cut out for the work. I'm optimistic because I knew from the very beginning that this work was always going to come with a huge amount of challenges. This is a lot of hard work and it demands a lot of resources. It takes an emotional toll and a financial toll, because often we end up funding the work ourselves due to lack of resources. It is very taxing.

Internet voices and LGBTQ

I would argue we have slightly less homophobia in the region now we have access to platforms and tools that enable us to hear the voices of the LGBTQ communities. They are coming out and telling stories about how they were abused or persecuted and judged, simply for being who they are. It makes it harder for people to hate something they didn't understand, to hate them just because the government has said it is a Western phenomenon and it's disgusting and 'un-Islamic' and all of these different things. Well now you have a lot of people who are active Muslims and they also identify as being part of the queer community. That was very important for a lot of people to truly understand what this community is all about.

By the wall, members of the Saaleek group are strongly affected by the forces of colonial domination on their front doorstep, from the documentary *Beneath the Earth*, 2017.

Migrant workers

We have a significant number of migrant workers in the Gulf who are literally enslaved, not just abused but genuinely enslaved on a daily basis. This is due to something called the sponsorship system, or the Kafala system, which gives their employers ownership over them; it is a completely legal thing that is still active in our societies and is something we have to document and fight.

The majority of the migrant community are from Southeast Asia – primarily India, Bangladesh and Pakistan. A lot of domestic workers come from Indonesia or

the Philippines, but increasingly, we are seeing them come from Uganda or Kenya. It's very diverse, but they share similar challenges. Some embassies are more active than others, but a lot of the time, unfortunately, migrant workers are left to their own devices. Many come here out of desperation, after being recruited by rogue agents who take advantage of them. It's really difficult for them to fight for their rights when they're being abused and taken advantage of.

There's a lot of reluctance to go back to accepting things as they are after we tell the migrant workers' stories. When people see these videos of workers talking about how they were stuck for 20 years without their families, about how they're starving or living in poverty, how they're unable to get access to their documentation, are raped, beaten, sexually harassed, abused, forgotten and sometimes their very own embassies abandon them. Some are just living on the streets with nothing, no access to their family and no way for them ever to get back home.

On persistence

Persistence was important for us. When we brought these stories to life and started documenting them and it took 10 years for people to listen. So sometimes people don't understand the need for persistence, because when you're that persistent, when you're that consistent in the work that you do, people eventually have to listen. They have to listen to the cause, and listen to voices that have been ignored for so long.

A lot of the time, what people think about new media is that if a campaign doesn't succeed in three months, they'll just move on or shift to a different theme or topic. But that's not how change happens. We might change one or two stories, we might save one or two lives, but at the end of the day, we are challenging the system and a status quo that enabled this to happen in the first place. We need a decade or two decades. We need a lot of consistency and a lot of persistence for this type of work, and it's exhausting. I'm not saying all of us should go on the frontline and fight and risk our lives, but there are ways to do that while remaining within limits.

On resilience

In the context of human rights, resilience means supporting communities equitably. That includes sharing the resources and technology necessary to bring communities out of poverty sustainably and for effective recovery from crisis. It means doing it not on their behalf, but in an inclusive manner that ensures their needs and voices are not hijacked in the process. Middle Eastern youth have developed a different identity – whereas before we embraced anonymity, now you see many young people embracing their connectivity and showing their faces to the world. Video-blogging is massive in the region, podcasting and snapchatting are huge, so you see a lot of interaction, much more than before.

Musician Shadi Sil, from the documentary *Beneath the Earth*, 2017.

The interesting thing is that there are two separate identities; the identity you take on in public and one you take on in private, where you're more expressive and political. You see a lot of people sharing political thoughts back and forth, and you see people getting arrested for private discussions that they've had on Facebook or WhatsApp – that shows the power of surveillance and the power of censorship. You don't always need the internet to be present publicly or to be vocal; sometimes just having one-on-one conversations is enough to land you behind bars. It's difficult for people to draw the line.

I think people are speaking up. I think access to the internet is encouraging and enabling people to speak up and have a voice and a really strong presence, to control their stories and their narrative. That gives me hope because it means that we can no longer allow propaganda to get away with lies or get away with abuse. It is harder to get away with persecution because we are actively calling it out; we are documenting it and we are hoping to correct it. The most important thing to come out of all of this is solidarity. There's a lot more hopefulness, because now people understand.

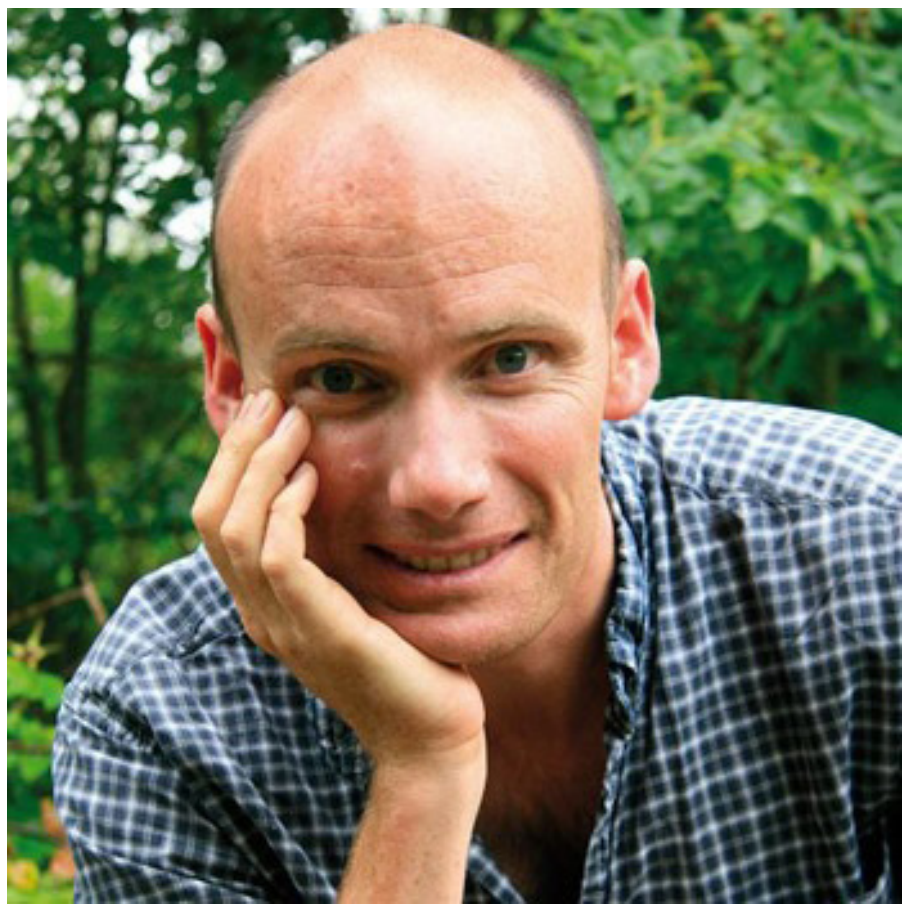
Chapter 11
On Narratives

In this final chapter, four experts share their experience of creating different narratives about nature and using these to increase environmental protection. First, we hear from Tom Crompton, founder of the Common Cause Foundation in the UK, whose research into values reveals that the dominant narrative of the selfishness of humankind is deeply flawed. It seems that our tendency to assume others are more self-interested than they are is something that itself leads to lowered engagement and wellbeing.

Paul Allen from the Centre of Alternative Technology in Wales presents a positive and attainable vision of the future and gives us hope that the real change will take place at a regional level. We then hear from Yuan Pan at the University of Cambridge. Her work on integrating biodiversity into the natural capital Framework encourages businesses and policymakers to act as stewards of the environment and nature's resources.

Finally, rewilding expert Paul Jepson talks about how nature recovery, science policymaking and public participation are all shaped by the narratives we create around nature. He describes the emergence of a new 'recoverable earth' narrative that can engage businesses in thinking about their impact on biodiversity.

Tom Crompton



Tom Crompton from the Common Cause Foundation, 2019.

My name's Tom Crompton. I direct a small not-for-profit called Common Cause Foundation, which works on people's values – what matters to people, what shapes what matters to people, and our perception of what matters to our fellow citizens.

As soon as you begin to ask what underpins public appetite for ambitious change, you are led to the social psychology of values. There's a great deal of data on people's own values but very little data on people's perception of their fellow citizens' values – a gap in the research that Common Cause Foundation has been working for several years to help fill.

Researching the impact of values

Our work is based on a widely used model of values developed by Professor Shalom Schwartz. The model is based on a values survey in which respondents are asked to rate the importance that they place on a wide range of values. These range from the more self-interested values such as 'social status' to more security-focussed values such as 'national security', to universalist values such as 'world peace', as well as values denoting self-direction, such as 'creativity'. Initially we used the Schwartz Values Survey to ask respondents to report on their own values, and then we asked them to respond on the values of a typical fellow citizen.

With regard to people's own values, the majority place particular importance on what we call 'compassionate values'. This is in line with other existing research. These

are values of friendship, kindness, social justice, equality, honesty; they probably also include some self-direction values such as curiosity and creativity.

A fundamental misunderstanding

While holding 'compassionate' values as very important, most people in 88 or the 89, countries for which we have data attach relatively low importance to values which stand in psychological opposition to those compassionate values. We call these 'self-interest' values, and they include concern for financial success, public image or social status. In the UK, for example, about three-quarters of people attach more importance to compassionate values than they do to self-interest ones.

When we move on to ask people about what values they feel a typical fellow citizen holds, we discover there's widespread misunderstanding. Most people underestimate the importance that a typical fellow citizen places on compassionate values and overestimate the importance they place on self-interest values.

"Our fellow citizens care more about one another and the wider world than most of us imagine."

That does not seem to be a result of reporting bias; you might imagine a participant is perhaps reluctant to acknowledge the importance they place on self-interest values, but we are able to control this kind of bias and it does not seem to be the case. But there's more. We find the more inaccurate a person's perception of a typical fellow citizens' values, the less connected that person is likely to feel to their community, the less likely they are to have participated civically (to have voted recently, for example) and the less supportive they are of action on a range of social and environmental issues, such as homelessness, climate change or inequality.

Finally, we find that the more inaccurate a person's perception of a typical fellow citizens' values is, the lower the score on their own wellbeing. It seems that our fellow citizens care more about one another and the wider world than most of us imagine. But there is an opportunity to change this, if we can successfully convey a more authentic understanding of what a typical person holds to be important. We anticipate this will help strengthen a sense of community and commitment to civic participation, deepen public support for action on social and environmental issues, and promote people's wellbeing.

For a long time, we've been told that we are essentially atomised, self-interested individuals who are out to optimise our own outcomes. This dominant perspective on human nature runs right through the natural sciences and economics, and it's also

promoted by many political leaders and much of the mainstream media and is implicit in a great deal of commercial marketing.

Social-purpose driven organisations

Many organisations espouse a strong sense of social purpose, promoting community and the wellbeing of people with whom they engage. This social purpose can be further strengthened by developing an awareness of the values an organisation is engaging, and therefore helping to normalise, among its audiences. We've begun to work in this way with museums and other arts and cultural organisations and have developed a range of case studies highlighting the possibilities of this approach.

We are particularly excited about beginning to work in a more concerted fashion across a city or region, helping strengthen citizens' awareness of the importance of 'compassionate' values: building people's appreciation of these as a core component of their identity as a member of their wider community.

On Greater Manchester

We've been supported by the local government in Greater Manchester, for example, to work with a group of arts and cultural organisations to promote a deeper appreciation of people's commitment to compassionate values across the city region. The ultimate goal would be to bring these values to the fore as an inherent part of a person's identity as a member of a particular community, so that 'I'm a Mancunian prompts the unconscious association: 'I care'.

It's important to emphasise that in this work we're trying to build stronger awareness of shared aspects of identity that are already strongly held. Most Mancunians (in common with most people) do care deeply for other people and the wider world – they just don't fully appreciate this value in one another.

From the Greater Manchester Values Survey (see valuesandframes.org). The people of Greater Manchester underestimate one another: 75% of people think that a typical fellow citizen of Greater Manchester holds compassionate values to be less important than is actually the case.

Defining the transformative potential of social and environmental groups

Compassionate values motivate a deeper concern about other people, other living beings, and the world in which we all live. Organisations working for social or environmental change can actively nurture the kinds of values upon which durable and transformational change is built. Self-interest values 'crowd out' compassionate values, so when we think about money, for example, we tend to be more mistrustful of strangers and less helpful. We're also less likely to adopt pro-environmental behaviours.

Currently, however, non-governmental organisations and other groups working on social or environmental issues often appeal to a wide range of values when trying to build public concern for the causes upon which they work.

Think about climate-change campaigning as an example - we are familiar with a whole range of reasons for caring about climate change, which appeal to a wide range of different values. At times these values are incompatible with each other: other species will die; crops will fail, poverty will increase; economic growth will be impacted; you'll no longer be able to travel to exciting places; your grandchildren will suffer; etc. These diverse appeals connect with a wide range of different values that are sometimes in tension with one another.

Some of these reasons for expressing concern about climate change connect with compassionate values. Some connect with self-interest values. Experimental evidence suggests that appealing to self-interest values is likely to be counterproductive in building stronger and more widespread public support for ambitious action.

Perhaps there is a way to reimagine the work of non-governmental organisations.

Rather than presenting a 'laundry list' of different reasons for caring about the cause on which they work, covering a wide range of values, an organisation could strive for greater consistency by appealing to compassionate values. Such organisations could then begin to see their work as part of a broader effort to strengthen people's compassionate values.

There is a broad palette of mutually-supportive compassionate values upon which to draw: people's concern for their friends, family and immediate communities; concern for the wellbeing of the next generation; compassion for oppressed people in other parts of the world; celebration of the beauty of nature; empathy with the suffering of other species; a sense of connection with nature. These are all reasons which will serve to connect with, and reinforce, compassionate values.

Only by working to strengthen these values is it possible to foresee sustained public commitment to holding governments and businesses to account on today's most challenging social and environmental problems.

Paul Allen

Paul Allen lecturing at the Centre for Alternative Technology in Wales, UK, 2019

My name is Paul Allen and I'm an electrical engineer by training. In 1988, I left Liverpool and came to work at the Centre for Alternative Technology (CAT) in Powys, mid-Wales, and I've worked here for over 30 years, doing a whole range of jobs. I am currently the Knowledge and Outreach Co-ordinator for CAT's Zero Carbon Britain project.

The Centre for Alternative Technology was set up in the early 1970s to help rethink the role of technology for society, to make technology work better for citizens, within the limits of the planet. Those pioneers began their experiments with a live lab – a real living community – looking at how we provide food, how we deal with waste, how we make the lights come on. Everything was trialled in a range of different ways, trying to make the results more resilient; new ideas were tested in ways the people living with them could understand while helping them to reduce their ecological impact.

Panorama view of the Centre for Alternative Technology site.

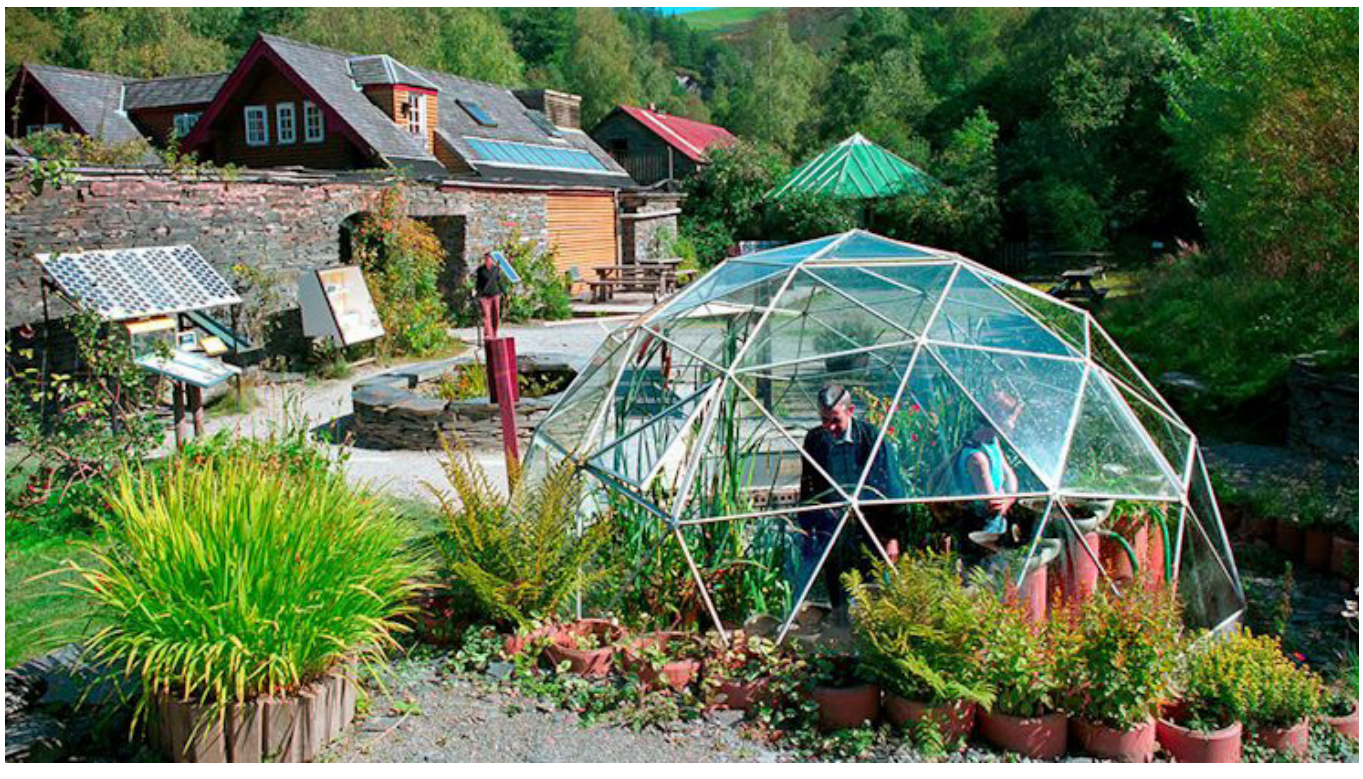
Back in the 1970s, what was being talked about by the alternative movement was far from mainstream thinking; it was at the cutting edge. Part of it was about having a holistic approach, not just focussing on electricity or heat but thinking about land use, food production, composting and waste, and looking at how all of those different systems could intersect. That kind of thinking has progressed during the 45 years of work at CAT and is now far more commonplace.

Today, integrated thinking is increasingly moving into the mainstream and becoming law, not only because the mainstream has grasped the physical limits of the

View of the Centre for Alternative Technology site from above, 2019.

world, but because integrated thinking shows how to create better value for better returns. We have to recognise that we are now in a climate emergency and we don't have the option of 'business as usual' for another 15 or 20 years. Now is the time to change.

A holistic approach is the sort of change in thinking that needs to run through every process, throughout government, business and industry. It's a way to almost light a candle for the voices of future generations in the boardroom. We all need to ask ourselves: 'Are we really behaving in the way we need to, in response to where we are now, and in terms of human beings providing for both ourselves and the earth?'



At the Centre for Alternative Technology, Machynlleth, Wales, UK.

Holistic planning at the Centre for Alternative Technology, 2019.

Hands-on learning at the Centre for Alternative Technology, 2019.

Mind-prints as well as carbon footprints

Rising to the challenge of the climate emergency means looking at the mind-print of business, as well as the carbon footprint – that includes looking at how marketing and advertising affect our social values. We need to address how we communicate values and move on from ideas suggesting that to be attractive or successful, you have to own a large car. This is something that needs to be challenged, something the car industry needs to take responsibility for.

People may need personal mobility to take the kids to see their grandmother, but there are other ways of doing that. We can buy a service or have a car just when we need it, rather than owning one. That kind of business model can foster a need for reliable cars that are designed to last longer, creating a situation where resilience and longevity actually help the business model, rather than designing short-lived cars that are far bigger and heavier than they need to be, and backing them up with huge amounts of merchandising, advertising and product placement. We need to challenge those norms, and a shift in ideas is already brewing.

Transport as an example

The Welsh government is supporting people to use public transport; there are free bus-passes and the 'Traws Cambria' public transport service is free on Saturdays and Sundays to encourage more people to think about using public transport. We've also reached a point in terms of data-harvesting where everybody could potentially put the

journey they want to make on a digital map, so the local transport providers know who needs to travel where, and at what time, and develop public transport systems that meet the actual needs of citizens.

We're not talking about delivering a utopia. We're talking about just changing the infrastructure system so human beings can continue to evolve within a safe platform for the next two, three, four, five-hundred years. Technology has to work within a plan that is driven by citizens and has social license from citizens. We can't have our citizens' lifestyles driven by technology and the profit of corporate interest. That's the sort of shift in understanding that I think needs to get out there.

"We can't have our citizens' lifestyles driven by technology and the profit of corporate interest. That's the sort of shift in understanding that I think needs to get out there."

The circular building on the right is the 7.2 metres high Sheppard Theatre, which has one of the highest rammed-earth walls in the UK.

Good practice – the change is happening

There's an enormous amount of good practice happening out there, which makes for case studies we can learn from. I recommend the Ashden award-winners website at ashden.org; there are some really good videos and fabulous projects happening on the ground right now. We just need to be like bees and cross-fertilise and cross-pollinate these projects to help other people to find them.

The basic problem we face is carbon lock-in, and the fact that how we deliver housing, transport, food, electricity and so on has co-evolved with fossil fuels over at

least 150 years. We need to challenge those complex intertwined relationships. One of the most exciting things we see are smart, innovative community-scale or city-scale projects. One example is local energy. If you're running a community on hydro, you don't sell your electricity to the grid at 5p a unit leaving the house next door to buy it back at 15p a unit. Instead, you have a virtual private-wire network set up so people around the community can buy the hydroelectricity cheaper – say at 10p a unit – and the hydro company gets a better price and builds good relationships with its neighbours.

Another good example might be at the municipal level. Nottingham City Council is running a project called Robin Hood Energy. Essentially it's run by the local council for the people, so the council buys and sells electricity as affordably as possible to bring the price down for the citizens of Nottingham. That's an example of doing things for municipal benefit, not for profit. There's so much good stuff out there and it is beginning to grow. The trick is to cross-fertilise so everybody can access really good ideas and not have to start from the beginning.

There's been technological advances in energy storage but there's also been big advances in restorative agriculture, rethinking how we can revitalise natural systems to increase their carbon capture as well as improving resilience and soil quality. I think one of the biggest challenges in rising to the climate emergency is that the people are often thinking about solutions from within their own individual silos of expertise. There are so many core benefits in thinking about energy, food, transport and buildings together in a single scenario. That is what CAT offers in its Zero Carbon Britain work. Thinking across sectors can help equip us for big systemic changes as well.

We need to think about how we are supporting land-use – what we're using land for – and we need to draw on indigenous wisdom from the farming traditions. If we look back at farms in Wales, Scotland or England over 30, 40, 50 or 100 years, we can find fabulous records of how we used to farm – producing more cereals and more oats,

The Centre for Alternative Technology in Wales is self-sufficient in water, and has a water-balanced cliff railway. This is the reservoir at the top of the site where all the water is filtered. Electricity is also generated on site by a micro- hydro scheme.

“People’s happiness is directly related to their connection with nature, what they do for a living with their sense of meaning and sense of social and natural worth.”

turnips and vegetables – and we can draw on that wisdom. It’s not going back, just rethinking farm use in the 21st century. This knowledge can help us understand what the land can produce in future, so that we grow a healthy mix of food – food that is a better match for what human beings need – while restoring soil quantity and quality. We also need to grow food that addresses resilience because we live in turbulent times. Having resilience built into the system, along with local connections and more flexible skills will give us a better system for future generations.

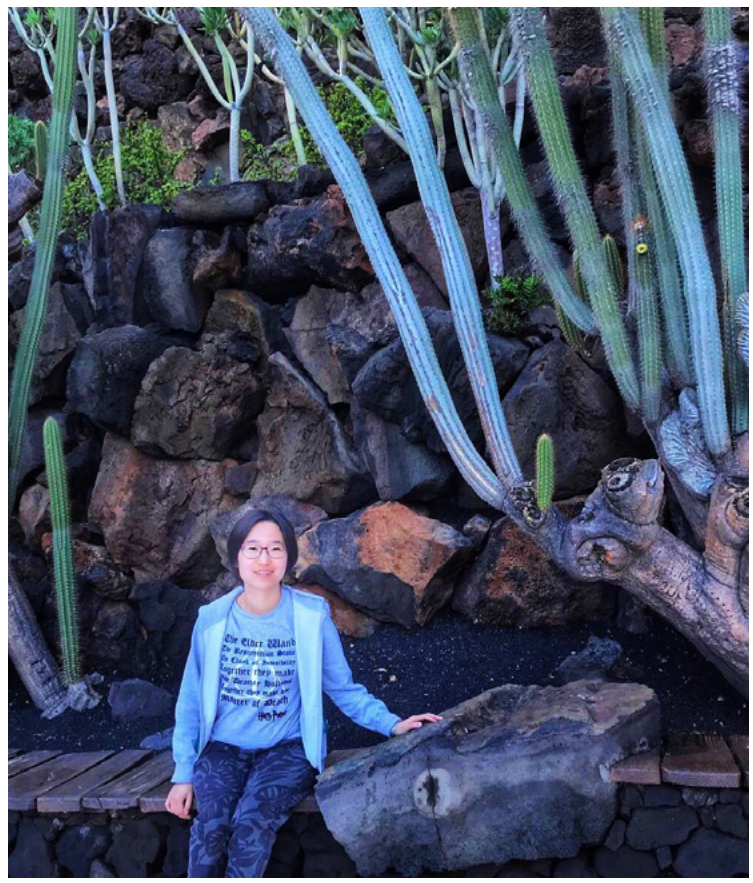
Interconnection

It’s important to look at the history of thinking about ourselves in relation to nature. We are a part of nature and are protecting ourselves, rather than environmentalists protecting something out there called nature that is nothing to do with us. Nature provides oxygen, food and everything we need; we are part of it and we are part of each other. That shift to recognising our interconnection with nature and each other is fundamental to helping change behaviour. And we need to change behaviour to make us happier and healthier human beings.

I think there are cultural norms that need to be rethought. The idea that people who work on the land are poor, and people who work in urban environments are rich and successful, doesn’t really work. People’s happiness is directly related to their connection with nature, what they do for a living with their sense of meaning and sense of social and natural worth.

The water-balanced funicular railway takes thousands of visitors up to CAT’s visitor centre from March to October.

Yuan Pan



Yuan Pan, Lanzarote,
The Canary Islands, 2019.

Hello, everyone. I'm Yuan Pan. I work with Professor Bhaskar Vira at the Cambridge Conservation Initiative (CCI) on natural capital, particularly on incorporating biodiversity into natural capital accounts. Personally, I'm quite a pessimist but, when it comes to conservation science, I think most of us here are optimists.

What is natural capital?

Capital is essentially an economic term, so natural capital is the stock of the world's natural resources. I see it as a different way of framing the conversation about protecting nature, creating a narrative that will hopefully have an impact on policymakers and businesses. What we're trying to say is that nature has a value for human society – some of that can be an economic value but it can be other types of value as well.

Within this research, we are focussing on natural capital but there are other forms of capital, such as human and social capital. And we're concerned with other types of value, such as the intrinsic value of nature. Nature has value in itself, regardless of whether humans are here or not. The idea of natural capital definitely began after the field of ecosystem services emerged, outlining the benefits we receive from nature. People tend to use the two terms interchangeably nowadays: ecosystem services are the benefits that we get from nature – it's like a flow of benefits – but natural capital is the actual stock of natural resources.

A lot of businesses are doing ecosystem-service or natural-capital assessments. And I think that's helping them to highlight that nature is providing a lot of resources for them which they need to maintain a resilient, sustainable ecosystem. All businesses require raw materials.

Yuan Pan at an ethnic minority village in Tongren, Guizhou, China, 2013.

Taking an anthropocentric view

If we do not manage natural capital sustainably, stocks of natural resources will eventually collapse. The terms we use are anthropocentric – human-based or human-centred – with a focus on benefiting human society. What I have found in my research is that by using these kinds of terms, your work resonates with businesses and policymakers. Unfortunately, we live in a society where most people concentrate on economic returns, monetary values and those kinds of ideas.

Taking biodiversity into account

Biodiversity is a difficult topic within natural-capital accounting and my project is trying to incorporate biodiversity into the framework. Currently lots of people just ignore biodiversity and I think part of the reason is that biodiversity is complex and can mean a lot of different things. Even as an ecologist, it's hard to answer the question: 'What do I mean by biodiversity?' We are trying to improve the situation by incorporating biodiversity into natural capital, saying that biodiversity has a lot of value even if the value is hard to measure. Relationships in biodiversity are non-linear and cannot be easily quantified in a monetary sense.

Everyone is talking about the bees disappearing. One of the things people pick up on when they talk about natural capital or ecosystem services is that bees are vital for

pollination. But when you look at the research, we cannot predict what will happen in future, with climate change and with the extreme weather conditions. So in the future, we might need many other species that currently don't seem to be performing any function.

The reason I think there's been more focus on climate change as compared to biodiversity protection, is that climate change is quite easy to conceptualise. There's a very specific protection goal of not allowing the global average temperature to rise beyond 1.5 degrees. You have a specific goal that you're working towards. We can't have such a specific protection goal for biodiversity.

Yuan Pan in the Peak District, UK, 2014.

Framing the story

The first question is how much biodiversity we need to sustain basic ecological functions and processes, so that as a society, we don't die. But the second question is: how much biodiversity do we want? That's not necessarily the same thing. A lot of people would like a very specific protection goal for biodiversity, just like climate change. But it is difficult to arrive a threshold value to say how much we actually want to protect.

We have a lot research and we have a lot of data, but there's no kind of overarching narrative or story that links them all together. And there are papers saying we need this kind of overarching objective. I don't know whether you've heard of a concept called 'half earth' or 'nature needs half'? It's a very bold objective that says we should set aside half of earth for nature. I can see it helps to have kind of an overarching, easy-to-understand objective.

Functional traits

I acknowledge the benefits of an economic valuation of nature and I have done some projects on it, but as an ecologist, I know there are a lot of things that can't be valued in purely economic terms. One of the things people have been looking into is functional traits for soil – earthworms and microorganisms – and also at macroinvertebrates in rivers.

I was interested in looking at functional traits. Ecologists traditionally look at species' diversity; they ask: 'how many species are there an ecosystem?' But what people have been finding in ecology is that functional traits are important to finding out new information, such as body size, how things decompose, or what kind of specific things insects do during decomposition. The research suggests we should be more concerned when a whole functional group goes extinct, when those services to an ecosystem can no longer be provided.

A case study for nature protection

I've got a small case study from China. The lake system I worked on there, Lake Tai or Taihu, is the third largest freshwater lake in China. There are about four or five major cities around that lake. What happened was there was so much pollution and urbanisation around the lake that, in 2007, people in one city had no access to tap water for about four or five days because there was a blue-green algae bloom.

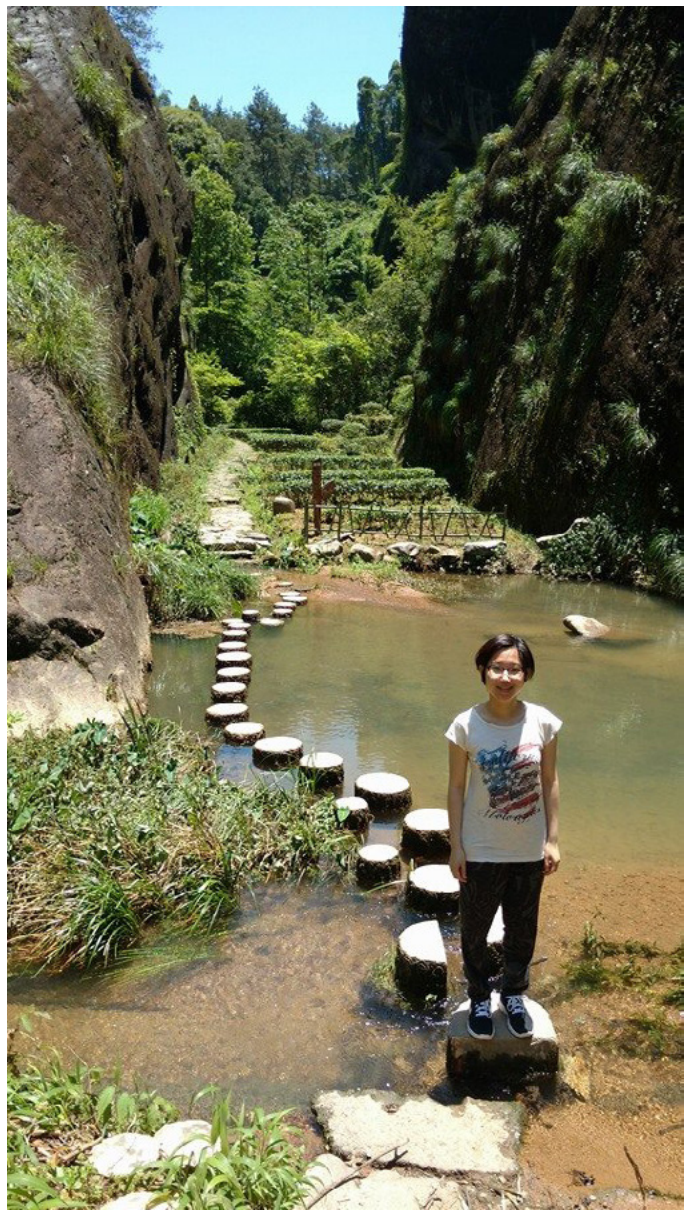
It got to a stage where the lake had a constant algae bloom and it was only then that the government realised this was a really serious issue. Suddenly they had to provide bottled water to the whole community for four or five days. There was price inflation in the supermarkets for bottled water and the government had to get people to clean decomposing algae from the lake. The whole event cost billions of dollars to clean up.

Later on, some of the scientists suggested that part of the reason for the algae bloom was because a lot of the areas around the lake had been reclaimed and the wetlands were destroyed. If the wetlands had remained as a buffer system for taking out pollutants, then perhaps they wouldn't have had to spend so much money trying to mitigate the effects after the event. So I think companies are also looking at how they can prevent a major disaster event like that happening, rather than letting it happen and spending vast amounts of money on repairing the damage afterwards.

Natural capital, intrinsic value and relational value

As a researcher, I am suggesting there are multiple forms of value, rather than just economic value. In terms of changing people's perspectives or the behaviour of businesses or policymakers, I don't necessarily think that a purely monetary valuation – of either natural capital or ecosystem services – is going to work. I think there has to

be a change in people's values and opinions, and this has to be reflected in the media. We're working on a framework of natural capital concepts, so natural capital shows the value coming out is instrumental value, a set of physical values. We can understand things like providing water, providing food, but it is also important to understand the intrinsic value of nature. Biodiversity has intrinsic value; whether we humans are here or not, biodiversity has a value.



Yuan Pan, Wuyishan (Mount Wuyi)
National Nature Reserve, China, 2016

Lastly, there is a new type of value coming up called relational value. It is about how humans relate to nature, with each other, and how we make decisions about nature from a moral or ethical perspective – regardless of whether nature has an economic value. This kind of moral, ethical imperative to protect nature applies even to businesses. A lot of businesses want to have a good image and part of that is environmental sustainability work. I think that is why natural capital and ecosystem services are resonating with a lot of business sectors right now.

As a traditional ecologist, I got into this because I love nature. But from working in China, I saw that the traditional conservation approach was not working. A lot of

businesses don't want to get involved with biodiversity because it's a complex concept, even for scientists.

Expanding the definition of sustainable business

We need to work out a way businesses can be aware of the importance of biodiversity for their business and their sustainability efforts. I worked with local ecological knowledge in China, and our research has shown how much we need local knowledge. A lot of experts had been going to a remote region trying to find endangered species and they simply couldn't find them. I went to the area and interviewed a number of ethnic minorities about where to find these species. They said, "Oh, we saw that species two weeks ago in that river." They helped me map out where they'd seen these species and that helped us to find them. There are lot of different subject areas in which research is needed to protect biodiversity; it is not only natural scientists but other types of scientists, economists, accountants, even philosophers.

Connectivity to and in nature

As a young ecologist, many years ago, my lecturers taught me about the importance of connectivity within the landscape. There is no point setting aside national parks or 'no-go zones' if there is no connectivity and no corridors between them. We have seen threshold values set for setting aside 'untouched nature' – I heard one suggestion that 11% of terrestrial areas should be protected as national parks. Originally, this number wasn't based on scientific evidence, it was based on a report that came out of the World Commission on Environment and Development in 1987. They decided that sounded like a good number for national parks. I think the current scientific evidence is showing that even 11% – which we are not hitting – is probably not enough.

Urban ecology is a very important research area. You can't consider national parks without looking at the fact people are losing their connectivity to nature through urbanisation. So even if we end up protecting the national parks, if everything else is urbanised children are not being exposed to nature; they're losing connectivity to nature and just playing computer games. And if they don't see the point of protecting nature, then in the future, I think these ideas still won't work.

Paul Jepson

Paul Jepson, 2019.

My name's Paul Jepson. I've been a conservationist all my life. I'm currently working for a progressive consultancy called Ecosulis and I recently moved into the enterprise sector after 12 years directing Master's courses in the School of Geography at Oxford University.

Prior to that, I was a practitioner working for BirdLife International in Indonesia, and I started my career as a local government officer working on urban conservation in the UK, in Manchester and Shrewsbury.

Enterprise and conservation

We now realise there's a big role for enterprise within rewilding or landscape restoration. There's a new area we're developing, working at the intersection of landscape-recovery, technology and finance. The configuration of conservation and environmentalism does need to change, but if you all work together, you become more than the sum of the parts. For real change to happen I believe we need to expand the employment market for young conservationists. This is not happening with NGOs – but by using technology and more distributed forms of organisation and ways of working, there's a real opportunity for new enterprises.

We can work in an entrepreneurial way in many different sectors for nature and the environment. For me, change and influence will come from informal networks connecting different organisational types within and across sectors. I favour an approach that co-designs solutions with clients, and brings in the creative thinking which is encapsulated in rewilding into those conversations.

What is rewilding?

There are a number of different ways of thinking about rewilding. My favourite is that it's just a label: a label like 'hippie' or 'punk', which signifies a form of unsettling. It's a reassessment of where we are and a desire to shake up the present to shape the future. Rewilding is doing this in terms of how we think about nature conservation and our relationship with the environment.

So, one way of thinking about it is that it is a new opportunity for people to engage with and shape futures: shape the future of nature, the environment and our engagement with it. I am talking from a bit of a Western European perspective, but a lot of our nature conservation has been focussed on protecting and conserving benchmark ecosystems or habitats as particular assemblages of plants, or specific types of woodlands, or grasslands. Or it has been about protecting declining species. A lot of conservation effort has been focussed on elements or units of nature, and particular identities. It's enabled strong law, clear policy targets, and the specification of practices and targets for managing nature.

Through advances in long-term and functional ecology, enabled by technology, we've come to understand previous ecosystems better. We've come to understand that across much of the world – including Western Europe – grasslands and large herbivore assemblages or mixed-wood pastures were the norm in the past. These supported a huge diversity of organisms and had great resilience.

Going back millennia, humans wiped out a lot of the big megafauna, or we domesticated it. We have been living in a world where we've internalised ecological impoverishment, both in our culture and in our institutions and conservation policy. There isn't one nature; there isn't a 'pristine nature' – there are multiple past natures.

Imagining rewilding in Europe

What would happen if – to the extent this is possible – we reassembled the large herbivore assemblies in Europe? We've ordered and separated nature into different realms: the wild and the domestic. Nowadays we only have cattle and horses in the domestic realm in livestock farming. But we still have deer in the wild realm. How would nature respond if we removed these divisions and reassembled our lost guilds of herbivores and their interactions with vegetation?

There were some pioneering experiments doing just this in the Netherlands. It is quite extraordinary what happens when rewilding ideas are put into play. Amazing paybacks occur. Nature rebounds, as natural habitats and smaller ecosystems – such as freshwater ecosystems – appear in places where we'd never seen them. Species we thought were rare suddenly return in abundance and more dynamic natures appear.

Paul Jepson hiking in the UK, 2019.

US versus European versions of rewilding

When we ask what rewilding means, I think it is important to recognise that it means different things. The term originated in North America, and there, rewilding was much more tied up with concepts of wilderness and maybe pristinity; about bringing wolves back to restore top-down cascading effects through the ecosystem.

The version of rewilding I'm involved in here in Western Europe is very pragmatic. It takes the view that if we're recovering and restoring nature, we can't go backwards. We can only go forwards, and the rewilding natures that emerge will be different from anything we've known before, but equally as wonderful. However, if we are acting to shape new natures, we can also do this in ways that will help solve current problems, such as the increased risk of flooding, and rural land abandonment.

Integration to tackle climate change

There is an integrated form of rewilding emerging in continental Europe. For instance, on the Dutch Delta, climate change is increasing the pulses of water coming down the huge delta rivers. To adapt to these changes and reduce the risk of flooding, summer dykes have been removed and the land between the summer and winter dykes has been purchased by brick companies who have excavated the silt in a way that restores natural river braiding and channelling. As the floodplain is restored, natural grazing is introduced with herds of 'wilded' horses, cattle and deer, and beavers are also released. The interactions between river dynamics and grazing dynamics is producing incredible natures.

Part of the story in the Netherlands is the range of social and economic benefits that rewilding generates. City administrations and companies have lower costs for flood management and insurance. The construction industry benefits from having a source of bricks. People benefit from having great natural areas where they can go and

have a nice time at weekends. And then there are tertiary tourism economies building on that, so you get these lovely, neat socio-ecological systems starting to emerge.

Another example of nature-based, pragmatic European rewilding solutions would be that of Spain and Portugal. The centre of the Iberian Peninsula is getting drier, traditional herding and the rural population are on a decline and this leads to an increase in biomass. This results in a higher incidence of wildfires. Rewilding involving natural grazing reduces the biomass load, and with this the wildfires. The rewilded landscape can be used as an asset for tourism economies based on the wilderness, or the production of high-quality wild meat.

Emerging narratives

As a species, something that distinguishes us is the fact we live in a third reality, where our thinking and actions are shaped by narratives, stories and language. These narratives have developed over time so they are sedimented histories of interactions between culture, politics, the environment and many other dimensions of society. They shape how we think, how we are, how we move ahead and how we relate to each other.

We have developed a narrative of nature and our relationship with the environment that is really powerful and has achieved a lot, but it is actually a cautious and protectionist narrative. It positions nature as something out there – separate and fragile, and under threat from humanity's wounding ways. As a result, colleagues in other sectors – such as architecture, urban development and industry – haven't really considered nature as a force we can engage with to shape place-based futures. It is often seen as a constraint on their visions, something we have to put aside.

In rewilding we're seeing the emergence of a different environmental movement, one that is more hopeful, empowering and pragmatic. It is underpinned by the recognition that we are where we are; we can't go back and there's not a lot point in blaming people and companies, let's just start doing something to make things better. The narrative of nature recovery often includes accounts of 'pioneer action', and people getting together to reassess worldviews and values and look at how we might do things differently. It invites participation and is an interactive narrative, from which stories of rewilding, and adaptation emerge.

A narrative of recovery

Something that comes to my mind is the notion of offsetting. We offset harm so, for example, companies offset their carbon footprint and impact on biodiversity. And that's one way to do it, by saying: 'OK, we feel a bit bad about things and want to do our best, so the negative impacts we can't avoid we'll try to offset elsewhere.' This is fine. But it's not as good as saying: 'Well, I don't want to just find a solution within business as

usual, I want to contribute to a vision, and to be part of change.' I think that's what many people want.

Two summers ago, I was trying to think through the difference between the rewilding stories I was hearing and the classic environmental narrative. This describes the catastrophic consequence of nature's decline and calls on governments to act to regulate the perpetrators of harm and protect threatened nature from development. I woke up one morning with the thought: 'rewilding is a narrative of recovery!' So I had my breakfast and jumped on my bike, cycled to the university and got onto the academic search-engines and started looking for 'narrative of recovery'. I found a body of literature, but the papers were all discussing mental-health recovery.

I was struck by similar 'architectures' of narratives of mental-health recovery and the narratives I was hearing in rewilding. It seems we are seeing the emergence of narratives for a more positive environmentalism. Rather than pressuring others to act on our behalf (the classic campaigning role), the new narrative echoes people who are struggling with mental health and who have concluded: 'I can't wait for a national health service or the doctors to sort me out. Sooner or later, I've got to start taking responsibility for my own environmental health.' And that's the epiphany rewilders seem to have had. They start engaging and acting, beginning journeys of practical rewilding that lead to the recovery of ecosystems, but they also own a spirit of optimism and a capacity to make things better.

So, it's interesting to consider the term rewilding and how its original ideas were associated with classic US wildernesses. The ideas in Holland started under the term 'nature development', which was a more technocratic policy, and then the term rewilding was applied. In semantics, the 're-' prefix's Latin origins can either mean 'back' or 'again', and that difference is important. Some people immediately see it as going back to a wilderness/fortress type of conservation, where outside people tell other people what to do. But in this European version, the 're-' prefix signifies 'again' and it is interesting when you look at the 're-' words European rewilding seems to align with: revitalise, rethink, review and recovery spring to mind. The way we use 'regeneration' in relation to urban renewal is nothing like going backwards, it is going forward with hope and ambition. From this perspective, rewilding is quite different from established approaches to nature protection.

Nature capital or nature's assets?

How we think about recovering the earth's systems, of which we are part, is in part guided by big international agreements and policies. But another part of it is just people doing things in their local area, in their areas of professional competence, and building forms of bottom-up momentum.

We have a framework called the natural assets framework. For me, capital is quite a linear type of thinking, We think about stocks of nature that can produce flows, such as labour or money, where natural resources can be an input into the production of goods and services. And sometimes, the concept of natural capital is divisive within the conservation movement as it gives prominence or pre-eminence to the logics of economics. I think the term 'assets' is less divisive than capital, and more meaningful. I use the term in relation to cultural, human assets, infrastructural assets and institutional assets – these interact with biophysical assets to create a natural asset. Many of those assets are already here. But we can think about ways to restore, recover and create new natural assets that are part of place-building, place rejuvenation or regeneration.

One of the nice things about the rewilding logic is that it releases you from baselines. You take inspiration from past natures to shape future natures. Rewilding is not trying to recreate something, it opens up spaces for different groups to come together and to think about what forms of natural asset they want and where those assets might be. I gave the example of the Netherlands, where they needed new natural assets along their rivers to adapt to climate change. It might be that, in other areas, people are looking for new natural assets to have somewhere to go dog walking, or to have a place where they can have a wild experience, or somewhere that produces food in a healthier, more ethical way.

A dream project

I think my dream client is somebody who has – or could create – spaces where you could do something pioneering. Contained areas where you could do something new, experimenting and trying things out, and people could come and talk about them. It could bring in people who are more progressive, a change agent could get involved and they could be used as exemplars for adoption in wider society. Basically, innovation hubs for nature. A dialogue, or co-design approach to change, bringing new environmental or natural futures.

A strong sense of place

Rewilding communities have outlined a set of principles, sort of guiding principles which are not prescriptive but do characterise the rewilding approach. These include the principle of restoring ecological dynamics and processes, taking inspirations from past natures to shape future natures, and working with restored forces of nature to offer up solutions to contemporary challenges.

One of the things we know from social theory, such as Benedict Anderson's book Imagined Communities, is that nature is very good at place-branding; constructing a concept of territory, a sense of community and belonging. If the new natures that we're

creating are novel, which they are, and we're reassembling large herbivores which are not protected by nature conservation legislation, they become spaces that are more free, where you can be more relaxed about what people do in them.

Again, this is happening in the Netherlands, where in the most famous site, Gelderse Poort, people are allowed just to do whatever they want. Of course, the interesting thing is because it is dynamic and wild, and there's big stuff walking around in it, most people tend to keep to the path. You become human again, you know, a bit scared. Nobody is telling you what to do. And if you want to go off – I mean, I did this once – If you want to go off the footpath and go in and get dirty, look for beavers and have a bit of an adventure, you can do it. But very few people do that.

We're living in an increasingly regulated society. Whatever the merits of it, there's more 'health and safety' and we're told to look after ourselves. The opportunity to get out into natural areas where you can just do what you want and get away from social norms, rules and regulations seems valuable. It's an interesting thing about nature – once you start helping it recover, it says 'thanks' so fast. Nature does have a force.

From anxiety to solutions

In the 1990s, I worked in Indonesia and set up the Birdlife International Programme there. Initially, I was working in eastern Indonesia on parrot conservation. But after I left that job, I started working as a consultant mostly with the World Bank and a couple of NGOs on the Sumatran frontier. And it was a pretty hard time – there were a number of things going on. You might go to a forest area and then return six months later and find the landscape totally trashed. Trashed in an almost... well, you turn down these roads, these dirt roads into swampy areas with just skeletons of trees still standing.

It was a bit harrowing. At the time, I was in this professional role, but it was getting to me, maybe partly because I had such magical times in my backpacker days, in tropical rainforests, just feeling the aesthetic, the sheer beauty and the wonder. The feeling that it's being lost and lost forever – it's the frontier. The other thing that really got to me was the chaos of international NGOs working at ministerial level, the World Bank and all that, and the realisation that we had no control over the chaos of the frontier, it was just out of control. Big NGOs were sort of dropping off from real active engagement with the ground.

I'd listened to the band Radiohead, but then I listened to the album Ok Computer and it became the soundtrack of my life. Anybody who knows Ok Computer will know those wailing crescendos and really hard guitar riffs. I think, if I am being honest, in that period, I moved into a bad place. Then there was teaching and the students started talking back to us lecturers, and they said: "Look, we don't want to hear all of this, we don't want all the evidence about the decline of nature and biodiversity loss and

blah, blah. We know things are in a bad way. We don't want a future where we're just defending the inevitable."

All the while, these images of the Sumatran frontier were in my mind. But they said: "We want theory, ideas and learning so we can shape the future." And as part of that, I started looking outwards and I found the work going on in the Netherlands and I started taking field trips out there and then came into this. It doesn't all have to be like the Sumatran frontier. Even though we may trash things, there are still opportunities for nature to recover and for us to work on nature recovery.

Chapter 12
On Good Countries

Simon Anholt is an internationally renowned policy advisor who has helped more than 50 nations use his ‘good country equation’ to help with education and development. The ultimate aim of this equation is to increase positive international co-operation that will help solve the major challenges of globalisation.

Anholt’s message to world leaders is simple: do good and good will come to you – we must change the way nations behave because our survival depends on it. His latest book, The Good Country Equation: How We Can Repair the World in One Generation combines this message with amusing and sometimes surreal anecdotes from a career spent travelling all over the world.

Simon Anholt

Simon in Helsinki, Finland.
October 2019.

Hi, my name is Simon Anholt. At the moment, I'm in my study at home which is in the middle of the countryside – all I can see from the windows is trees. I'm quite far from anyone else, which is really nice.

What am I? Normally, I call myself a policy adviser because my day job is advising governments on policy. Of course, 'policy' is one of those words that can mean all kinds of stuff, but basically, what I do is advise governments on how they should behave, particularly towards other governments, the people of other countries and international institutions. I'm not really concerned with what governments say – I'm not interested in messaging, I think that's all a bit boring and shallow. What I'm interested in is what countries do, and what governments do. When I call myself a policy adviser, I suppose that's what I mean: I advise them on how to behave.

Asking the right questions

If I had a euro for every time a government has come to me with a question that turns out to be the wrong question, I would have about 39 euros by now. Countries are difficult and complicated things, it's hard – even for the people running them – to know what the main issues are. Governments have often come to me during my career thinking they've got one kind of problem, and it turns out they've got another.

With government officials in
Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia. April, 2008.

Researching a country as an outsider

The first thing I do when I'm working with a country is to try to get to know it as well as I can. I mean, it's very obvious that, as an outsider, I'm never going to be as much of an expert about the country I'm advising as its own citizens – not even if I live there for the rest of my life. But then again,

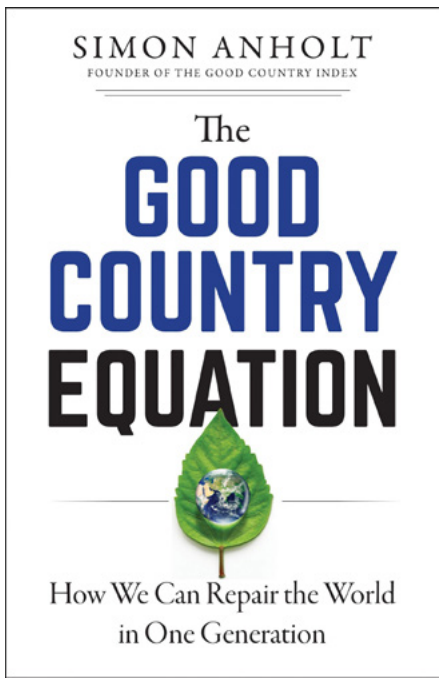
that's not what I claim to be. I don't claim to be an expert on their country. What I do claim to be as an expert on the rest of the world, in a very general sense.

Having said that, I do try to become as much of an expert as possible. I read mainly, particularly these days, when travelling is difficult, reading becomes more important than ever. I try to get through as many books as possible and I normally spend about four or five weeks at the beginning just reading novels and history books and profiles of the country, as well as listening to their music, discovering poetry and literature and watching their films.

When I actually travel to the country, I spend many weeks going around meeting as many people of varied sorts and from different parts of the country as possible. Gradually, a picture begins to build up – it can only ever be a superficial one, but it is of some value.

The book: *The Good Country Equation*

I wrote *The Good Country Equation* because I had to – otherwise I would have burst! I've spent the past 20 or so years (it's probably more than 20), going around, working with governments – and often with presidents and prime ministers, kings and queens – in 56 or 57 different countries around the world.



Simon's book: *The Good Country Equation; How We Can Repair the World in One Generation.*

And I don't know whether it's just me, or whether it's something to do with the job, but in every country I go to, something extraordinary happens. I always have some weird conversation or a strange experience, and it's happy or funny; dangerous or exciting, even potentially life-threatening. I've been doing this job for years and years and each time I come back, everybody I know says: "You really should write a book about all this stuff. No one will believe a word of it, but you've still got to do it." So eventually, after about 20 years, I thought: "I will write this book."

I wanted to make it primarily autobiographical, not because I see myself as the hero or anything like that, but because I wanted it to be readable. I'm very interested in the state of the world and what's gone wrong with the world, as many of us are. Everybody in the world should be interested in what's gone wrong with the world and should be trying to find out whatever they can about it.

So I thought, I'll make this a tragic and comical autobiographical travelogue, and I'll write it in colour, if you know what I mean. It won't be a black-and-white textbook, it'll be a colourful book with stories, places, people and anecdotes; funny things and sad things, frightening things and inspiring things. And then I'll weave into it the story of how

I gradually – country by country – began to figure out what has gone wrong with the world. After that, I can start weaving in what I think we ought to do in order to fix it.

Opening ceremony of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Summit in Valletta, Malta, 2015.

As a child

I don't know what it is about me but, when I was a kid, and as I was growing up, I always assumed people from other countries were going to be more interesting than people from my own country. And I assumed other people's countries were going to be more exciting, more beautiful and more interesting than my own. I thought of this point of view as normal but gradually, as I grew up, I discovered it wasn't normal – in fact, the older I got, the more uncommon I found it to be. I've discovered an awful lot of people think that people from other countries will be less interesting than those from their own country, and other people's countries are going to be less interesting than their own.

I don't judge them in any way because of that, but I realise that we're different. At the very heart of the book, there is this assumption that being a human being is more interesting than being a Swede, a Brit, a Guatemalan or a Kenyan. The most interesting thing about us is certainly not the fact that we have a passport from a particular country, but that we belong to this extraordinary, remarkable, infuriating species that is humanity.

My world view, in many ways, is a really simple one. In fact, simplicity is a good place to start, because one of the things I say early in the book is that, over the years, I've come to revere simplicity. And I don't mean the kind of simplicity that comes from only seeing the surface of things (which is very common these days). What I'm always aiming for is the simplicity that comes from seeing through the surface of things. The surface seems complicated, but the basic underlying truths are often really simple. So many of the complex issues we're facing as an international community, present themselves in a way that is terrifyingly complex, but actually underneath all that, we've got to hold onto those simple truths and simple values.

Two underlying issues

So, what's wrong with the world? In The Good Country Equation, I said it was simple. There are two things wrong with the world – the first is the way that countries behave, the second is the way that people behave. Although it may seem absurdly simple, it is

worth stating: what's wrong with countries is that they don't work together sufficiently to resolve the gigantic global challenges facing humanity in the 21st century.

What the United Nations calls the Sustainable Development Goals are attached to these big challenges. So, climate change, migration, human-rights abuses, conflict – everything from narco-trafficking and small-arms proliferation, right the way up to pandemics – have got one thing in common. They were all caused by human beings. And therefore, they can all be fixed by human beings.

The other thing that they all have in common is that they're all globalised. They don't just exist in one country – through globalisation, they are connected to every country in the world. That's why it's impossible for an individual country to solve any of them. America can't fix the economic turmoil; China can't fix migration; the European Union can't fix climate change. These issues are too big and too connected – it's not that we don't know the answers or solutions to these problems. We do. We know the solutions to all of these problems and we've known them for years. The reason why we don't implement those solutions is because countries don't work together to do it.

We fail to bring enough resources to bear in tackling those problems. When I say that one of the problems is the fact that countries don't work together, it's really that they don't work together frequently, thoroughly or sincerely enough to make proper progress against the vast majority of these global challenges. So, we need to change the culture of governance worldwide from one that is fundamentally competitive, to one that's fundamentally collaborative. And I guess that's the main theme of the book.

Simon in San Miguel Allende, Mexico, 2011.

The role of corporations

I'm really interested in corporations and their role in this debate. I say in the book that corporations influence – or perhaps I should say govern – the lives of as many (or nearly as many) people as governments do. Most of us spend most of our working lives associating with corporations. The power and influence they have over human behaviour is, in our modern age, almost as great as the power exercised by governments. Many of the corporations are, of course, bigger than countries, and many of them are richer and more powerful than countries.

I think that's probably where the 'good country' argument goes next, asking: what is a good company? I'll talk about the Good Country Index

later, but the idea of a 'good company index' has been up there in my wish list of things I'd do if there only were a few more hours in the day. It is not just companies of course – religions influence the lives, values and behaviours of as many people as corporations and governments.

I've talked mainly about nations because I think they're the problem. I have a bit of an issue with the whole idea of nations and nationalism – as do many of us. What I never really had time to do, either in the book or in my career, was to start drilling down to the level of smaller communities, which are critically important, and more important to people than nations. It is a lot easier for me to feel loyalty towards the village I live in than towards the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland which – like most nations – is only a construct.

Outward and inward mentalities

One of the most potentially dangerous current ideas is that there are two distinct types of people: globalists and localists. It is dangerous because along with it comes the notion that these two types should hate each other, mistrust each other and spend a lot of time screaming abuse at each other. This is daft because all human beings (as far as I can tell) are to some extent localists and globalists. It's simply a question of the degree to which they're one or the other, and we have to work together.

I'm often so busy thinking about global stuff that I don't spend nearly as much time as I ought to worrying about the problems of the small village in which I live. It's obvious

With Verónica Michelle Bachelet Jeria, President of Chile, Santiago, Chile, September 2008.

With President Heinz Fischer of Austria, Vienna, Austria. April 2013.

we should all be collaborating; young people and adults should be collaborating; people from different nationalities should be collaborating – it's so blindingly obvious. There's no question that a national image is, for most people, a seamless extension of their self-image, and even if you don't regard yourself as particularly nationalistic, patriotic, proud or whatever, there is space in your heart for the country you're born into. So over the centuries, humans have spent much time, effort and worry trying to forcibly instil this idea of 'national belonging' or 'national identity'.

I think we've forgotten the original purpose of it. The original purpose was to fight wars. It was instilled in people very deeply that the noblest thing a young man could do was to sacrifice his life for the fatherland. It is such an obviously ridiculous idea and that's why it took so long and such an effort to brainwash people into believing in it. And in order to make it work, they also had to brainwash the women – the mothers and sisters and daughters – to encourage these young men, to tell a young man to go and get a gun and risk getting himself blown to bits. With young men, that's not so very difficult as many of them want to try that kind of thing. But to get all those sensible women to persuade them it was the right thing is an altogether harder task. But it worked, and nowadays it is very deeply ingrained.

I think this is ultimately about human development. When a baby is born, it only feels loyalty to itself, its need to survive and to its mother. Gradually that sense of loyalty will extend to the father, if he's lucky, to the immediate family and then maybe on to the village, and on and on and on. It goes to the nation state and stops – that's where it gets stuck. Feeling loyalty to anything bigger than the nation state seems to be a problem for the majority of us. I think that human development has got stuck at the nation state.

Don't get me wrong; I don't think there's anything wrong with loving your country. I think it is, in many ways, quite natural. Loving your country, but not loving your nation. To love your nation is to love its army or president, and it very often goes with the idea that other people's nations are inferior or don't quite deserve to occupy their space on the surface of the planet as much as yours does. And that's when it starts becoming problematic.

Understanding that we all belong

I think it's absolutely the case that the sense of belonging to a nation is a fundamentally different thing from the sense of belonging to a smaller place, like a village, a town or even a city, for the simple reason that a nation state isn't actually a thing that exists in the real world. It's an intellectual construct. So this feeling that we belong to an intellectual construct is part of the modern mindset that detaches us further from the reality of nature.

After a meeting at Number 10 Downing Street, UK. March 2005.

I still remember the first time I went up in a plane. I was a geography nerd – I used to read the atlas in bed – and when I looked out of a plane window for the first time and couldn't see those thick black lines dividing one country from another on the ground, I was surprised and disappointed. But it reminds us that this thing called a nation – this thing called a country – is an invention. If you identify yourself as belonging to an invention, then that is something not quite right.

I hope the first thing people consider about me (if they consider me), is not my nationality. Like many of us, I'm a terrific mongrel anyway and many different races, religions, creeds and nationalities go into the soup that makes me who I am. I find it very, very difficult to identify or associate with any particular country.

The United Kingdom – where I was born – has, like most countries, done an enormous amount of absolutely hellish things. It's also done an enormous amount of really quite creditable things, as have most countries.

What is a good country?

I think it's absolutely the case that the sense of belonging to a nation is a fundamentally different thing from the sense of belonging to a smaller place, like a village, a town or even a city, for the simple reason that a nation state isn't actually a thing that exists in the real world. It's an intellectual construct.

I still remember the first time I went up in a plane. I was a geography nerd – I used to read the atlas in bed – and when I looked out of a plane window for the first time and couldn't see those thick black lines dividing one country from another on the ground, I was surprised and disappointed. But it reminds us that this thing called a nation – this thing called a country – is an invention. If you identify yourself as belonging to an invention, then that is something not quite right.

I hope the first thing people consider about me (if they consider me), is not my nationality. Like many of us, I'm a terrific

At Torshavn, the Faroe Islands, May 2009.

mongrel anyway and many different races, religions, creeds and nationalities go into the soup that makes me who I am. I find it very, very difficult to identify or associate with any particular country. The United Kingdom – where I was born – has, like most countries, done an enormous amount of absolutely hellish things. It's also done an enormous amount of really quite creditable things, as have most countries.

Speaking at TEDx, Amsterdam. October 2014.

The most common myth

One of the biggest challenges I've experienced during my career advising governments is having to prove to governments that it is actually possible to be a "good country", to harmonise inside and outside responsibilities. Because an interesting thing about all of these politicians I've worked with is that it doesn't actually make any difference which party they come from, whether they're left wing, right wing, or turbo jet-propulsion unit – I really don't know that it makes any difference at all. They all believe the same thing, which is that anything you do that's good for your own people is going to harm people in other countries, and anything you do that is good for the planet or the environment is somehow going to curtail your economic growth, harm your own people or harm your territory. This seems to be an article of faith all politicians have absorbed – and it's absolutely not true.

One of the really lucky things about doing the job that I do, and working with so many different countries, is that I've had the opportunity over the years to try real policies in real countries and see whether it's possible to harmonise domestic and international responsibilities. And what I've discovered is that not only is it possible, it also makes for better policies. It makes for more imaginative thinking, and imaginative thinking is what we desperately need in the 21st century.

Not only is it possible to do the right thing for your own people and for people in other countries, it actually means that you'll end up doing better and more interesting things. Somehow, we need to get the word out to the politicians that this is possible.

Smart policymaking, beyond altruism

I'm not talking about altruism or self-sacrifice. The idea that any country should sacrifice itself for another is daft . No country could, would or should ever consider doing such a thing. It's like going back to the ridiculous Victorian idea of charity, where

it's the obligation of the wealthy to help the poor; well, there's some truth in that, but it's not really the point. The main point is that we all occupy a space on this earth and therefore we all have an equal responsibility, whatever has happened in the past, to try to fix it as equals and move forward together.

When I say to a country: "you need to be good", I don't mean that you need to give all your spare money to poorer countries. What I mean is simply that it is in your best interests to do this. I suppose the core component – the surprising component – of the good country equation is a remarkable discovery I made back in 2012, that it is actually directly and economically in your interest, as a country, to assist and support the international community.

Dalarna hörsalen, Teknikdalen, Sweden. May 12th, 2007. Photo by Henrik Hansson.

The reason is a two-stage argument. First of all, the overall image or good name of a country is the thing which more than anything else drives its success economically. The countries that have got good, powerful, positive reputations, such as Sweden, Switzerland, Canada or whatever - find it much easier to make money out of trade, tourism, foreign investment and everything else. They have a much better relationship with the rest of the world, and with consumers around the world. They make more money because they have a better image.

The countries that have weak or negative images, and those few people have heard of or that are associated with war, conflict or trouble of one kind or another, they find it much harder to grow economically. It's harder for them to get trade, to export their products, and it's harder for them to attract talent and investment. So, discovery number one: countries need good images in order to progress and prosper.

Discovery, number two: the factor that more than anything else determines whether a country has a good image; this is not based on how successful it is, it is about how much it helps the international community. People admire Sweden or Norway, for

example, not because they offer successful social models, but because they believe Norway and Sweden contribute to the wider world in which they also live.

If I live in in Paraguay, I don't care whether people in Norway are happy, because it doesn't affect me – I don't live there. I don't care whether they have good welfare or good healthcare provision, because that doesn't benefit me. What I care about is whether these countries are making the world a better place for me and my children. So, when I go to bed at night, I think positive thoughts about Norway and Sweden, because I think to myself, they at least care and I'm glad they're there. They're not disturbing the international order. On the other hand, there are other countries I worry about as I go to bed at night because they are disturbing the international order. That is what I believe.

So, discovery number two is that if a country wants to have a good reputation, it has to be a good citizen. It has to contribute to grand challenges, to visibly and effectively tackle migration, poverty, inequality, pandemics, climate change. This is a big discovery, a bit like corporate social responsibility but at the level of the nation state. If you want to make more money as a country, you need a better image. And if you want a better image – you have to goddamn behave yourself! That is quite a surprising discovery.

Why I wrote this book now

I think the main reason I waited to to write this book is that I only felt ready once I had some mechanism for encouraging countries, governments and people to behave differently. Something that was not just an appeal to moral values. I hope people won't think I'm a cynic, but I think expecting governments and corporations to change their behaviour on the basis that something is 'right' or 'wrong' is never going to be as successful as appealing to them on the basis of something they really care about.

Teaching a masterclass in London, United Kingdom, January 2013.

For a government, it's the principle of staying in power and pleasing your people. So, in a completely non-cynical way, I don't waste my time telling people not to do things because they're morally wrong. Nor do I waste my time criticizing people for doing the right things for the wrong reasons. I don't care about their motivations. I'm too old for that. I care about whether they're doing the right thing. That's why the good country equation seems ready for exposure, because it's based on simple, enlightened self-interest.

I'm not lecturing anyone. I'm not saying you must do this because it's the right thing to do, because racism is wrong, because colonialism is wrong. Those conversations can, will and must continue, but generally they do not cause people to change their position. On the other hand, if you can give someone a very clear explanation as to why changing their position will produce a better result for them – and one that is in line with what they're trying to achieve – you stand a much greater chance of making them change. I'm not a purist in that respect. The 'good country equation' is an appeal – a simple, logical, clear appeal – to the self-interest of governments and individuals.

The ins and outs of evidence-based research

Since the beginning of my career, I've wanted the advice I give to countries to be evidence based. The discovery that countries need a good image, and those images can only come from principled international behaviour, mainly comes from analysis of the data for a survey called the Nation Brands Index, first created back in 2005. This is a big global poll which interviews 20,000 people around the world each year about their perception of 50 different countries. I discovered that, by 2012, it had accumulated over a billion data points. So, I took some time off to analyse this huge database because I wanted to the answer to one simple question: "Why do people admire country A more than country B?"

With H.E. Given Lubinda, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Zambia, in London, UK. November 2012.

I knew it wasn't because country A makes more noise about it; I knew it wasn't because country A produces relentless propaganda campaigns telling everybody how wonderful it is – it was obvious from the data that it had nothing to do with that. But by crunching this huge database, what I did discover was, in fact, that yes; the primary driver of a positive national reputation is a country's good behaviour in the international community. I've used lots of other surveys, both my own and other people's, to corroborate that evidence over the years.

Leaning on a lamp post, Madrid, Spain. June 2009.

That awful word, brand

There's a risk that if a country has a particularly good image, people will not be interested in hearing about or recognising some of the bad things it does. In exactly the same way, if a country has a very bad, weak or negative image, people will not be interested in learning about the good things it does. The reason for this is that we're short of time. Last time I checked, there were 205 countries on Earth. And if we're worried about the reality of all those countries, and spend our time looking into exactly why we think they're good or bad, and how much harm and good they have done, we leave no time for anything else. We wouldn't be able to eat or sleep. And so we make do with a kind of prejudice stereotype.

This is why I use the awful term 'brand'. Twenty years ago, when I first used this term, I was being ironic, saying that countries in the age of globalisation have turned into brands on a supermarket shelf. It's as if we can only hold in our mind one simple single fact about a country at any one time, one simple single set of prejudices, positive or negative.

This is hugely problematic because countries, of course, are not simple. Countries are complicated, and anything you can truthfully say about a country, the opposite is probably equally true in a different domain. The reason I was keen to create the Good Country Index, which I launched in 2014, was an attempt to make it easier for people to

answer that question. Is this country generally doing more good, or more harm, to the planet and humanity in general? I wanted to create a kind of balance sheet for each country, one that answers that 'good or bad' question – in so far as it's ever possible to answer it.

Why have a Good Country Index?

The Monday of the week I started work on the Good Country Index, David Cameron, who was then prime minister of the UK, told us that we should all despise China because it was a serial abuser of human rights. When it came to Friday, he told us that we should all love, admire and respect China because it was going to rescue the British nuclear industry.

I felt quite confused and I thought, well, this is supposed to be my trade and I'm puzzled, what on earth must everybody else be thinking? And I realised that actually I would like to know whether China is a net contributor to humanity or whether it's getting a free ride on the international system. And I'd like to know the same about the US, the UK and all these other countries… so that's where the Good Country Index came from.

The way it works is, in principle, very simple. There are 35 big data sets which mostly come from the United Nations and a few other international organisations; these are organisations capable of collecting robust and reliable data each year from about 100-plus countries.

Basically, I look at the data that gives you some kind of measurement about the positive or negative impact of that country outside its own borders. So, for example, I'm not interested in Sweden's healthcare provision because that only affects its own citizens. If you want to find out how Sweden treats its own citizens, there are a dozen indexes out there that will tell you, but I want to know whether I, as a Brit, should feel glad that Sweden exists. Is it making the world a better place for me, not just for Swedes?

Simon Anholt in China, 2017.

You can look through the Good Country Index and you can see the positive and you can see the negative. You can see, for example, that Sweden, like most rich countries, gives away quite a lot of spare cash to poor countries every year. And that's generally a good thing – I don't think it's the best possible thing, but it's a good thing, and so Sweden gets a high mark on overseas development assistance. On the other hand, I can also see that it's very near the bottom of the list

when it comes to weapons exports. Now, call me old fashioned, but I happen to think that selling guns is wrong because it results in people being killed (and by the way, you can also see how many people Sweden was responsible for killing outside its own borders, which is not very many).

Across these 35 data sets, you can see all the measured and measurable contributions, positive or negative, that 160 or so countries make to the world outside their borders. And it adds them up for you and it gives you a total. Whether you agree with that total or not is entirely a matter of personal opinion. At least it's trying to break down some of this enormous complexity and give you an answer to that question. Am I right to admire Sweden? And if so, in which areas? And in which areas is Sweden not admirable? And is there something that I should do about it?

Framework of the 'good country equation'

There are 35 individual indicators that make up the overall ranking of the Good Country Index, and these are sorted into seven categories. Each country is evaluated according to its global contribution to science and technology, its global contribution to culture, its global contribution to international peace and security, its contribution to world order, its contribution to planet and climate, its contribution to prosperity and equality and, finally, to health and wellbeing. Within each of these seven categories, there are five data sets, so it comes to a total of 35 data sets.

I didn't actually start with that framework, it's what I ended with. My colleague Robert Govers and I started searching for data sets, and we spent a long time trying to find good, annual, reliable and robust data sets that measured the external impacts of the behaviours of at least 150 or 160 countries. And we managed to find 35 such data sets – that's all there are.

Some of them are negative, such as: how many people have you killed outside your own borders? Some are positive, such as: how many scientific journals have you exported contributing to global science and technology? These sorts of questions make up seven rankings – one for each category – and an overall ranking for the Good Country Index. That's basically the way it works.

The Good Country Index is updated every year. I'm currently working on the latest edition and hope it's going to be out in the next week or two. The thing that people need to understand about the Good Country Index is that these data sets that are produced by the UN and other big international bodies, they tend to be about three or four years behind the times because they're only published after they've been checked. And if you're talking about millions and millions and millions of data points, that takes a long time.

United States of change

For example, the picture offered by the latest edition of the Good Country Index (Index 1.3), shows the United States of America at an overall ranking of 40. This means that, relative to the size of its economy, it's the 40th country in the world in terms of the good it does to humanity outside its own borders (incidentally, it's a very, very close tie with Russia, which comes in at 41).

The interesting thing is that not only within the Good Country Index, but also in the Nation Brands Index (which measures international perceptions of a country), the US has been plummeting since Trump took office. It is now the seventh most admired country on the planet, according to the Nation Brands Index, which is the same place it was in during the second term of George W. Bush. The US is normally the most admired country on the planet – that's its natural position – but every time they have an internationally unpopular president (which happens from time to time), it tends to drop down to sixth or seventh.

A tool for reflection

The Good Country Index is very much a work in progress. It cannot and does not claim to present a full account of what countries contribute to the rest of the world. It just needed to be done.

Unless you've got data, you can't really include a subject in the framework. You know, certain things are hard to measure, but to try and have an index is a step in the right direction. It's shining a small light on the corner of a very large, very dark field. And what I always hope, when I release indicators like this, is that people will take it as a cue to contribute, to make the world a better place collectively, rather than take it as a cue to just say this index or framework isn't complete. I know it's not complete.

On environmental data

In terms of environmental data, we're still in the Middle Ages – it's that bad when it comes to measuring ecological performance, if that's the right word for it. First of all, I use the ecological footprint created by the Global Footprint Network; that's quite a sophisticated piece of work and useful because it gives a kind of overall element to the country's score. We're very interested in the policy side – as it is governments, as much as countries, that we're talking about. We also include the degree of compliance each government has with major environmental agreements. And we include hazardous-pesticides exports – not necessarily because this is, in itself, the most significant thing, but because it tends to correlate quite strongly with a lot of other environmental or non-environmental behaviours.

We look at the countries renewable energy share because that gives us a hint as

to the level of investment that they're putting into being more planet-friendly. And we look at emissions of ozone depleting substances, which is still an issue. And again, it's an important indicator.

Other uses of the Good Country Index

There are a few countries where they're now actually using the Good Country Index as a framework for questioning candidates who are up for election, which is a really interesting way of using it. There's a group in Australia, for example, who use the Good Country Index to quiz candidates who are standing for a local or national election.

They say: "This is Australia's profile at the moment; this is the good we do; this is the harm we do. What are you proposing to do about all of those?" And the politicians are absolutely dumbfounded by this, mainly because elections are, generally speaking, 100% a domestic affair. Nobody talks about international relations during national elections. That's a whole other story.

From competition to collaboration

I've already outlined why it is in the economic interest of countries to collaborate with other countries, but it's also valuable to them for another reason – it creates better policy. If you look at the amount of collaboration governments typically engage in during their day-to-day existence, it is pathetically small. The Nordics are better than many, in a number of respects, because they have a long history of cooperation and collaboration, both within their subregion and within the European Union. So they know that it works.

Entrepreneurial multilateralism

There's this idea which I mentioned in The Good Country Equation, which I call 'entrepreneurial multilateralism'. This is extremely difficult to say – it's a terrible name, but the idea is that countries should not wait for the UN to tell them to work on things, they should get together in random, weird, collaborative units and solve their problems collectively.

When I was advising President Koroma in Sierra Leone a few years ago, I said to him, you know, we've got this this huge challenge of poverty in Sierra Leone, and of course, it would be great to talk to some other countries and see if we can observe some best practice, if we can do some multicultural brainstorming. But let's not go to the traditional countries, you know, the donors that always help Sierra Leone or your regional neighbours or whatever, let's do something a bit more random and see if we can generate some unpredictable, much more exciting and inspiring interactions. Let's go as random as we possibly can.

Sierra Leone begins with the letters SL, why don't we just team up with every

other place we can think of that also begins with SL – Sri Lanka, St Louis, Missouri; South London and so on? And you end up with the most random group of places you can possibly imagine, places that have nothing in common. This is what the great Edward de Bono called lateral thinking. The more you mess up the frameworks of your thinking, the better the solutions become. If you've got Sierra Leone having a conversation with St Louis and South London, then that's a conversation you've never had before. Guaranteed.

The mutualization of experiences – the mingling of the gene pool and the stirring up of races, religions, histories, experiences, mindsets and approaches – is going to make for a much richer soup and far better ideas. The great thing is that if you come up with an idea for reducing poverty in Sierra Leone, it works for all of those places and can be implemented in all of those places. And you've fixed five countries for the price of one.

I think foreign ministers should be renamed global ministers and her or his job shouldn't be to keep foreigners out of the country, it should be to throw open the windows on every single policy debate, even if it's something absolutely domestic. If I was a Swedish politician and I had to sort out nurses' pay, then the way that I would try and do that would be to get a couple of public health specialists from Guatemala City, a couple from South Korea and a couple from South Africa, and we'd all sit down and brainstorm. I absolutely guarantee that we'd come up with better and more interesting ideas than if we just had a bunch of Swedes in the same room. The same is true of any nation. Your culture determines the extent to which you are capable of creative thinking, and the more you stir it up, the better the results.

This is not political correctness. The whole point about difference is that it's the most productive thing in the human experience, an extraordinary resource for creative and imaginative thinking. If only we stir things up – in fact, I think the world's national anthem should be "Stir It Up" by Bob Marley.

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org), the Commonland Foundation (commonland.com), the Overview Institute Australia (overviewinstituteaustralia.org), and Future Planet Europé (future-planet.net). He is on the jury of the Lush Spring Prize (springprize.org), a Findhorn Foundation Fellow (findhorn.org), and is a member of the Evolutionary Leaders Circle (evolutionaryleaders.net), the International Futures Forum (internationalfuturesforum.com), H3Uni (h3uni.org), and the Research Working Group of the Global Ecovillage Network (ecovillage.org). He also acts as an advisor to the 'S.M.A.R.T. UIB' Innovation Centre of the University of the Balearic Islands (smart.uib.eu). Over the past few years he has supported Common Earth in their work introducing regenerative development to the 54 member nations of the Commonwealth. He has worked with the Buckminster Fuller Institute (www.bfi.org), the Spring Prize for Social and Ecological Regeneration and the Regenerative Communities Network to lay the foundations for the Regenerosity Network (www.regenerosity.world). Daniel has been collaborating with GaiaEducation (gaiaeducation.org) since 2007 and he is also on Patreon.

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Chapter 8, On Knowledge

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Agriculture Organization of the UN, where she was responsible for the preparation and maintenance of factsheets which were part of the Fisheries Global Information System, as well as managing global databases on fishing fleets.

Many thanks to **Reetu Sogani**. Reetu works as a practitioner, researcher and an expert advisor with various international and national academic and research institutions. In the UK, these include the University of Cambridge, the University of East Anglia and the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) In Sussex, UK. She also works with the Overseas Development Institute (ODI), Climate and Development Knowledge Network (CDKN), Practical Action Consulting (PAC), International Development Research Centre (IDRC), the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED), ACTION AID (in India), and the Government of India and Indian state governments on gender, traditional knowledge, food and nutrition-security and resilience.

Chapter 9, On Art

Many thanks to Catrine Gangstø and Laila Kolostyák.

Catrine Gangstø is the founder of the Peacepainting Foundation (Peacepainting.org) which runs painting workshops for children, youths and adults all over the world. **Laila Kolostyák** is a visual artist who works with snow and ice and is the founder of Ice Circle, an informal network of snow and ice professionals. Laila and her colleagues have engaged a generation of young people in creating and enjoying outdoor snow and ice experiences that culminate in the annual Borealis festival (borealisvinterfestival.no) in Alta, which lies 375 kilometres north of the Arctic Circle.

Chapter 10, On Connected Voices

Our thanks go to Walid Al Saqaf and Esra'a Al Shafei.

Walid Al Saqaf is an internationally renowned free-speech advocate and software developer who focuses on the non-commercial use of Internet, and its impact on democracy and freedom of speech. Walid is a member of the Board of Trustees of the Internet Society (ISOC- internetsociety.org) and co-founder of the society's Blockchain Special Interest Group. He is an associate professor at Södertörn university (www.sh.se) in Sweden.

Esra'a Al Shafei is a Bahraini civil rights activist, and founder of Majal.org – a network of digital platforms that amplify underrepresented voices in the Middle East and North Africa. Majal includes platforms such as mideastunes.com and Migrant-Rights.org.

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Chapter 11, On Narratives

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Chapter 12, On Good Countries

Many thanks to **Simon Anholt** (simonanholt.com). His book, *The Good Country Equation: How We Can Repair the World in One Generation* is published by Berrett-Koehler Publishers. In partnership with the research group Ipsos-Mori, Simon produces two major global surveys tracking public perceptions of countries and cities, the Anholt-Ipsos Nation Brands Index and City Brands Index.