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# Local Futures

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## 2018 Annual Report



### Note from the Director

Helena Norberg-Hodge

People often say to us: “We get it that globalization is bad and localization good, but what can we actually *do*?” In the following pages, Local Futures staff describe many of the innovative global-to-local projects we ran during the past year. These range from long-standing activities like the **Ladakh Project** to more recent programs like the **International Alliance for Localization** (IAL).

I am greatly encouraged by the dramatic increase in the reach of our message. Just recently, for example, *The Economist* magazine invited me to debate the WTO’s chief economist, Robert Koopman, at a high

### In this issue:

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- Mindful Futures in Ladakh
  - Four more Economics of Happiness conferences
  - International collaborations for localization
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level **Asian Trade Summit** in Hong Kong next February. When even a bastion of conventional economic thinking like *The Economist* is paying attention to us, we know that our reach has grown exponentially.

Nonetheless, we still have a long way to go. Over many decades of working in the intersecting worlds of environmental advocacy, social justice, community building and new economics, I’ve found that one of



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the biggest obstacles is the lack of information in the West about the realities of life in the so-called Third World. From within the bubble of the modern, urban, industrialized world it can seem unrealistic or overly idealistic to promote artisan production for basic needs. But the opposing position – that we should uncritically embrace still more technology and global trade as a solution to the problems we face – is actually quite dangerous. What this view ignores is that the global economy is – even as you read this – destroying the livelihoods of millions of people. Most of them are in the less-industrialized world, where small-scale agriculture and artisan production still exist, and remain the backbone of local economies and communities. Destroying these livelihoods and the traditions that bind them to cultural identity is a major cause of the violence and fundamentalism that plagues the world today.

Our decades of practical experience promoting decentralized renewable energy in Ladakh make it very clear to us that the choice is not between NO technology and continuing down the path promoted by governments and big business. There is clearly the possibility for people in the “Third World” to have light, heat, running water, and greater comfort without destroying the planet.

However, the current blind promotion of an ever more energy-intensive and resource-destroying techno-economic system, which now includes artificial intelligence (AI) at every turn, is taking all of us, in First and Third World alike, in a disastrous direction. By rewarding businesses for using ever more energy and employing fewer people, it is adding to both pollution and unemployment – all the while centralizing economic and political power in a smaller number of hands. As we argue so often in our films,

lectures, and written materials, the fact that eight men now have more wealth than the poorest half of the global population is not a separate problem from the frightening increase in toxic pollution and CO2 emissions: both are linked to a global economy that simultaneously destroys people’s livelihoods and the natural world.

In response to the urgent political, social and ecological crises we are facing, we are pleased to have been closely involved with a number of significant new initiatives. These include **CRTL-Shift: An Emergency Summit for Change** in the UK, **Renew Fest** in Australia and the international **Wellbeing Economy Alliance** (WEAll). We are also thrilled that our international flagship program of **Economics of Happiness conferences** is attracting ever more interest from around the world. The big picture we provide is helping to build broad, energetic coalitions for fundamental change. In 2018, we co-hosted four conferences – in the UK, Italy, South Korea and Japan – and in 2019 we have plans for conferences in Brazil, Mexico, and Ladakh, as well as continuing with our series in South Korea.

Our other core programs have continued to go from strength to strength, including our

“Localization – a very important antidote to globalization – is the only hope for the future. If our civilization collapses, which is a very real threat, humanity will be able to survive only by adopting the principles of localization, and if we want to avoid its collapse, we must adopt them urgently. Globalization is curiously narrow in its vision: it does *not* spell community, togetherness, co-operation, but rather a monoculture based on the spiritually impoverished ethic of the contemporary West, bent on eroding and destroying ancient, indigenous ways of life, and pursuing material wealth at all costs. Localization respects the complexity of both the human and natural world and fosters a respectful attitude to others, to life and to ourselves.”

~ [Iain McGilchrist](#), author of *The Master and His Emissary*

podcasts, blogs, films and publications. As always, our highest priority is to expand the grassroots localization movement, with a particular focus on food. For more than 30 years we have been reminding people of the central, vitally important role of healthy food systems: food is something everyone, everywhere, needs every day, and so changing the food economy is a crucial step towards changing the entire economy. To those who argue that we need large industrial monocultures and supermarkets to feed the world, we remind them that small, diversified farms using ecological methods actually produce vastly more food per unit of land than large monocultures.

We're proud to say that the local food movement has grown by leaps and bounds since we began promoting it in the 1990s, but other localization initiatives are also spreading across the world. Natural house building, rewilding, alternative medicine and healing through connection to nature and community – all of these are what we call “ancient futures” trends. They are taking root far more rapidly than people realize, and they are having clear and immediate benefits wherever they are implemented. In fact, the deep, ecological localization we promote is a genuine solution multiplier that can help address most of the diverse problems facing the world today. By enabling communities and local economies to thrive, economic localization is truly a win-win strategy for systemic change.

It's unfortunate that the media rarely covers these stories, preferring instead to focus on the theater of left-right politics or the personal lives of the rich and famous. This is one reason our **Planet Local** series is so inspiring: it shows how people-power is bringing about fundamental change at the local level.

I hope you enjoy reading about our continued efforts this year and that you'll help us spread the word.



## Video celebrates Economics of Happiness conferences

Kristen Steele, Associate Programs Director

It was six years ago that we began our Economics of Happiness conference series, and since then we've organized 18 gatherings, ranging in size from 100 to over 1,000 people, in seven countries: the US, UK, Australia, Italy, India, South Korea and Japan. Now seems a good time to celebrate this accomplishment in a visual format. From video footage and still photos, we have selected some of our favorite moments and put them together in a 3-minute montage. This lively video aims to give a sense of what it feels like to attend an Economics of Happiness conference – from serious talks linking the global economic system to social and environmental breakdown, to the hope and inspiration offered by the multitudes of thriving local initiatives, to the simple joys of making new connections. The video is now available on our [website](#) and on our [Vimeo](#) and [YouTube](#) channels.



Opening scene from conference video

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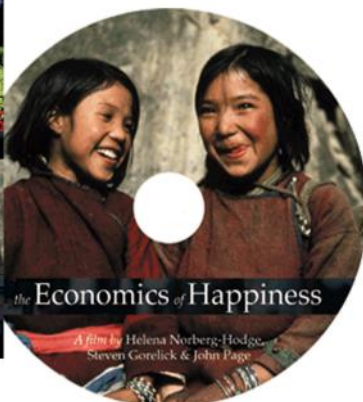
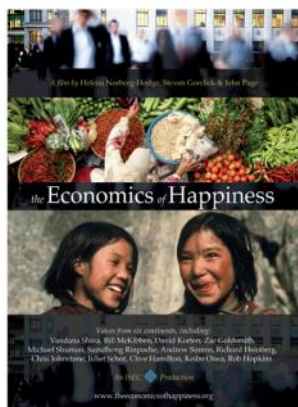
## Economics of Happiness film screenings

Victoria Clarke, Administrative Coordinator

People across the world continue to organize local screenings of our groundbreaking film, *The Economics of Happiness*. In 2018 there were public screenings held on every continent. Here is a small sampling:

- a screening at a theatre in Bucharest – the first ever public screening in Romania
- an event at the University of Guam, where Helena Norberg-Hodge skyped in for a post-film discussion
- a public screening in Canada organized by the Divest Waterloo campaign
- an event in New Zealand sponsored by Seniors Climate Action Dunedin
- screenings in the US, UK, Mozambique, Mexico, Luxembourg, China, and elsewhere

Seven years after the film's initial release, feedback from around the world tells us that the compelling message of *The Economics of Happiness* remains as timely as ever.



## Additions to Local Futures Staff

Steven Gorelick, Managing Programs Director

We're very happy to announce that two enthusiastic young people have joined the staff, and will be helping us spread the global-to-local message more widely:

**Carly Gayle** is the new Project Coordinator for the Planet Local series and will assist with other projects as the need arises. After graduating Magna Cum Laude from Wellesley College, Carly worked in Bali, Indonesia, for Alam Santi Sustainable Living Design, which plans, designs and implements eco-friendly projects throughout Indonesia. She also volunteered for the Asian/Oceania branch of the Global Ecovillage Network, where she planned and facilitated their 2017 annual convergence in the Philippines.

**Laura Tyley** is our new Digital Outreach Coordinator. She earlier created her own business, Fresh Evoke Marketing, which aims to help small non-profits and businesses navigate the world of digital marketing. She is also piloting a new site that will help people "find the events and people that will repair your connection to yourself, others and the environment."





## Ladakh Project

Alex Jensen, Researcher and Project Coordinator

Obstacles in the way of a sustainable future for Ladakh were abundantly clear this past summer. A severe drought was underway, compounding a groundwater depletion and contamination crisis caused by over-development in Leh and surrounding areas – even as still more hotels were being built to accommodate ever-rising numbers of tourists. The drought – a byproduct of climate change – also added to the difficulties facing Ladakhi farmers. In light of all this, Local Futures’ work is more crucial than ever: from media literacy and compassionate economies to zero waste, from film screenings and discussions to help with the harvest – we worked non-stop this season with a heightened sense of urgency.



Fallow fields in a Ladakhi village

### *Global-to-Local workshop for Operation Groundswell*

Our first major activity was a five-day workshop for the High Altitude Education program of the international “backpacktivist” organization Operation Groundswell. With a dozen participants from North America, we examined the corporate-



Global-to-local workshop participants

controlled global economy and connected it to local phenomena like the plastic waste crisis in Ladakh. The workshop’s themes were illuminated by a range of activities – the spectrogram (posing controversial statements about development to see where people “stand”, literally, on the matter), a field-trip to the local waste dump, and mapping out connections among the diverse forces impacting Ladakh. In the latter half of the workshop, we focused on alternative visions and practices for shifting toward the local and ecological. Film screenings, debates, talks, guided walks, and trips to local NGOs rounded out a rich and rewarding week.



Barley ready for harvest

## *Mindful Futures Workshop*

We had barely caught our breath before we launched into our next endeavor – an inspiring four-day workshop dubbed “Mindful Futures 2: Creating a Compassionate Economy” – co-organized with Flowering Dharma, an engaged spirituality group run by Ladakhi youth. A follow-up to 2017’s Mindful Futures workshop, this event filled us with a sense of hope and possibility born from the spirited participation and genuine socio-environmental concern of the 25 young Ladakhi participants – mostly university students studying outside Ladakh. The days were packed with talks, debates, films and participatory activities focused on understanding the structural violence of the global economy and the compassionate possibilities of localized economies. Guest speakers included the leaders of the Snow Leopard Conservancy; prominent Buddhist monk and representative of the “Go Green, Go Organic” initiative, Rigyal Rinpoche; and local film-maker Stanzin Gya, who screened his climate change film *Jungwa*. Long-time Local Futures ally Keibo Oiwa from Japan delivered a closing talk full of humor and wisdom – as well as warnings about the social deformations Japan experienced after embracing manic industrialism-materialism – that memorably communicated the essence of the workshop.



Mindful Futures workshop speakers and participants

“It was one of the best workshops I ever attended. The talks, discussions, interactions, and films shown have posed a very positive impact on my life. Every day, I went home full of knowledge and told it to my parents and friends. These kinds of workshops are a must and an effective change maker in today’s fast-paced high modern techno world. I am really going to attend all the other workshops here so that I could also make a very positive change in the world or at least in Ladakh.”

~ Stanzin Jidey Zangmo  
Mindful Futures workshop participant

## *Media Literacy Workshop*

In early August, we moved on to our most intensive, longest-planned workshop of the summer, “Media Literacy and Film-making” co-organized with Ladakh Arts and Media Organisation (LAMO). We had around 25 participants (ranging from 14 to 20 years old), mostly from five high schools in Leh and Stok. We had aspired to do a workshop like this for a long time. As consumption of media and use of media devices increases in Ladakh, it is becoming more and more important for Ladakhis to be aware of its deeper messaging and broader impacts.

Over the course of a full week there were presentations, participatory activities and film screenings – about the advertising industry, corporate control of media, the psychological, social, and environmental effects of “screen culture”, and the need for media literacy. Special guest speakers shared their expertise in topics like media ethics, the link between media and junk food, media portrayals of gender, and the use of media tools for positive change. Experienced filmmakers also taught basic skills in story writing, filming, and editing. Participants had the opportunity to work in groups to create short films about their own experiences of media in Ladakh, which were screened for an audience of parents and members of Ladakhi civil society. Special





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## Economics of Happiness conferences

### *Prato, Italy*

Anja Lyngbaek, Associate Programs Director

For the second year in a row, Tuscany was the site of an Economics of Happiness conference, again co-organized with Italian philosopher and writer Gloria Germani, and with the support of several Italian partners, including Mani Tese, Movimento Decrescita Felice and Terra Nuova Edizioni.

The conference began with a day of thought-provoking workshops at the beautiful Villa San Leonardo al Palco, near the city of Prato. About 200 people took part during the first day, which offered a choice of workshops on topics such as rethinking progress; decolonization of our imaginations; media and the fabrication of thought; local food and farming; happiness and place; and culture and education. It was a day filled with lively discussions, inspiring exchanges, and good food. On the second day we shifted to the Teatro Politeama, a lovely historic theater in the center of old Prato, for a full day of plenary talks and panel discussions.

In addition to Local Futures director Helena Norberg-Hodge, speakers and workshop presenters included:

- Serge Latouche, French degrowth pioneer
- George Ferguson, former mayor of the UK city of Bristol
- Manish Jain, co-founder of Swaraj University in India
- Keibo Oiwa, author and founder of Japan's Sloth Club
- Masahiko Yamada, food sovereignty activist and former Agricultural Minister of Japan
- Anja Lyngbaek, Local Futures Associate Programs Director

- Mauro Bonaiuti, co-founder of the Italian Association for Degrowth
- Rossano Ercolini, Goldman Environmental Prize winner



Anja Lyngbaek and George Ferguson during a break-out session

The conference attracted a lot of media attention: 28 different news outlets mentioned the event, including newspapers, magazines and radio. Some of these, like *La Stampa* and *Lettera43*, covered the conference in depth. Thanks to this broad exposure, our call for systemic change reached large numbers of people beyond those who attended the event.

### *Bristol, UK*

Henry Coleman, Project Coordinator

Our second Economics of Happiness Conference of the year was held in Bristol, England, in partnership with the NGO [Happy City](#). The highlight of the opening event on Friday evening was a debate between three respected voices with radically differing opinions on the role of big business in creating an economics of happiness: Andy Street, Founding Director of the global environmental consultancy SLR; Andrew Garrad, Director of Garrad Hassan,



the world's largest renewable energy consultancy; and Local Futures Director Helena Norberg-Hodge. This debate and the ensuing Q&A with the audience set the tone for a riveting and thought-provoking conference.

To start the main event on Saturday, the headline speakers – former Bristol mayor George Ferguson, Happy City Chief Executive Liz Zeidler, local economy author Michael Shuman, New Economics Foundation Fellow Andrew Simms, Campaign for Real Farming co-founder Colin Tudge, and Helena Norberg-Hodge – gave punchy summaries of their main messages in quick succession. With audience appetites well wetted, the following Q&A session was expertly moderated by BBC presenter Jonathan Dimbleby. Participants then broke out into numerous workshops, which allowed for deeper engagement with a wide variety of issues and ideas for changemaking. Among the many workshops topics were: a local future for our towns and cities; big picture activism; ethical investment; inclusion and environmentalism; and empowering youth in the age of the consumer culture. The energy of everyone present made for a productive environment in which to learn, share and find inspiration.

"Events like this, which are driven by a fierce passion for doing good in the world, are always a strong draw for me. I chaired a Local Futures conference in London some years ago, and found the combination of expert speakers, real world examples and practical solutions highly stimulating."

~ Jonathan Dimbleby, moderator of Economics of Happiness conference, Bristol, UK

The day's formal sessions concluded with two plenaries that explored the deeper ecological and cultural foundations of change-making in our world. The evening closed with socializing and

dancing, and with the work of two young local artists who responded to the conference via the media of music, poetry and drawing – a touching end to a fantastic day.

Finally, the smaller event on Sunday morning saw George Ferguson in conversation with social entrepreneur Jamie Pike about the fabric of local economy and culture in Bristol. Both spoke from a place of deep experience and practical wisdom, and the intimacy of the event allowed for a truly enjoyable conversation that was the perfect finale for our Bristol event.

"Great conference. Fabulous people. Interesting discussions. Marvelous place. Seamless execution. Thanks for including me."

~ Michael Shuman, speaker at Economics of Happiness Conference, Bristol, UK

### *Jeonju, South Korea*

Marjana Kos, Executive Assistant

Local Futures continued its unique collaboration with the government of Jeonju, South Korea, as we co-hosted our fourth annual Economics of Happiness conference in Jeonju City.

The first conference in this series, in 2015, resulted in the [Jeonju Declaration](#) on the Economics of Happiness, which committed the



Speakers and participants at conference in Jeonju

local government to “[shifting] its administrative system away from a paradigm that prioritizes growth and development towards one that puts people first [and] to create an economy that works for the people and makes local communities happy.”



Performance at conference in Jeonju

This year's conference focused on three main threads:

- local food, including Jeonju's food plan and policy
- local finance strategies, including the city's local currency pilot project
- urban regeneration with the active involvement of residents

The event also continued the cross-pollination of ideas between the South Korean and Japanese localization movements – a process that began in 2017, when several members of the South Korean organizing committee took part in the Economics of Happiness World Forum in Tokyo. This year, two key change-makers from Japan spoke at the Jeonju conference, sharing information about Japanese localization trends, strategies and initiatives.

The two-day conference program included a mix of keynote speeches, panel discussions and workshops. In addition to presenters from Jeonju

and elsewhere in South Korea, there were a number of international speakers, including:

- Jay Tompt, co-founder of the Totnes REconomy Project and the Local Entrepreneur Forum in Totnes, UK
- Junko Edahiro, co-founder of Japan for Sustainability and President of the Institute for Studies in Happiness, Economy and Society
- Takahashi Hiromichi, Executive director of Japan's most innovative farmer-consumer food cooperative, the PAL System

Plans are already underway for another conference in Jeonju in 2019.

### *Tokyo, Japan*

*Marjana Kos, Executive Assistant*

For this conference – a follow-up to last year's Economics of Happiness World Forum – the auditorium at Meiji Gakuin University was filled to capacity. The crowd, including a sizeable contingent of young people, was energized by a range of inspiring speakers who covered everything from agriculture to local business to free trade. The last of these is a particularly important issue in light of Japan's ratification of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), a trade deal that will deliver a serious blow to that country's small farmers.

Plenary speakers included:

- Tsutumi Mika, Japanese journalist, on “Globalization: US and Japan”
- Jay Tompt, on “REconomy and Local Business”
- Kai Sawyer, founder of the Permaculture and Peace Dojo, on “Localization in the US and Japan”

- Patricia Moguel, environmental education adviser to indigenous organizations, on “The Significance of the Tosepan Movement in Mexico”

Along with music and prayer, there were also panel discussions on the TPP, agriculture, and food sovereignty in Japan, as well as a forum in which young people described their visions of localization. After a full day of conference events, the following day was devoted to a strategy meeting for localization activists.



Conference in Tokyo

## Lectures, workshops, and other events

Local Futures staff

Our perspective on economic localization is being increasingly sought out by other organizations and institutions. Throughout the year, Local Futures Director Helena Norberg-Hodge was invited to speak at and participate in numerous courses, conferences, workshops and other events, including:

- teaching a 5-day course at Schumacher College in the UK titled [“Earth, Culture, Economy: the Power of Local”](#), along with our colleagues Satish Kumar and Stephan Harding

- a lecture to students in the “Sustainability And Environmental Action” class, part of the [School for International Training’s](#) study abroad program in Australia
- [“Rethinking Technology and Progress”](#), an online class in collaboration with David Shaw, Coordinator of the Right Livelihood College at the University of California, Santa Cruz
- a public talk on [“Hope in a Time of Crisis”](#), in Dartington, UK
- an [event](#) in London, UK, at which she was joined by The Rules member Jason Hickel for a discussion of degrowth and localization
- a [lecture and workshop](#) on the economics of happiness at Gaunts House, in Dorset, UK
- appearances on two panels at [The Downs Festival](#), Bristol, UK



Video of Helena speaking at Schumacher College

Associate Programs Director, Anja Lyngbaek also gave a number of talks, including:

- “Big Picture Activism” at the Freedom Festival in Hull, UK, followed by discussion with the audience about moving beyond left-right politics and what we can learn from the abolitionists and suffragettes about movement building;
- “Relocalization for the Common Good” to 100 students at the University of Chapingo, Mexico;



- a series of lectures – on consumerism and identity, the global corporate growth economy, and place-based economies for people and planet – at the Colegio de la Salle, Mexico.

In addition, Executive Assistant Marjana Kos taught modules on the economy and money at a Permaculture Design Course in Slovenia, and Researcher and Project Coordinator Alex Jensen participated in the [Degrowth Gathering](#) in Chicago.

## Planet Local

Carly Gayle, Project Coordinator

**P**lanet Local is our web series showcasing some of the thousands of grassroots localization projects springing up all around the world. Currently in its fifth year, Planet Local includes an [online library](#) showcasing more than 100 projects, and a [Medium.com](#) account, created last year, profiling outstanding initiatives in greater depth.



Soul Fire Farm

Over the past year, Planet Local has featured organizations working in innovative niches in the local food movement: architecture firm MASS Design Group's design work for rural and urban food infrastructure, Soul Fire Farm's reparations map for black and indigenous farmers, the



Maasai Center for Regenerative Pastoralism

Mesopotamian Ecology Movement in North Kurdistan, and linkages between local food, schools, and physicians. A three-part series on community-managed water sovereignty dove into the increasingly important topic of water access, and highlighted place-based local water resilience strategies in Asia, Africa, and South America. Articles on Resilient Power Puerto Rico, the Maasai Center for Regenerative Pastoralism, and the Global Ecobrick alliance also illustrated the emancipatory power of self-reliance.

In the coming year, Planet Local will continue to expand the library, with a focus on projects that strengthen land-based livelihoods in the developing world. We hope these examples and case studies will make the diverse localization movement even more vivid and accessible — inspiring people who wish to embark on new

projects and connecting those around the world who are already hard at work. We will also cross-post our blog entries on the same Medium platform, enabling these timely essays to reach an even wider audience.

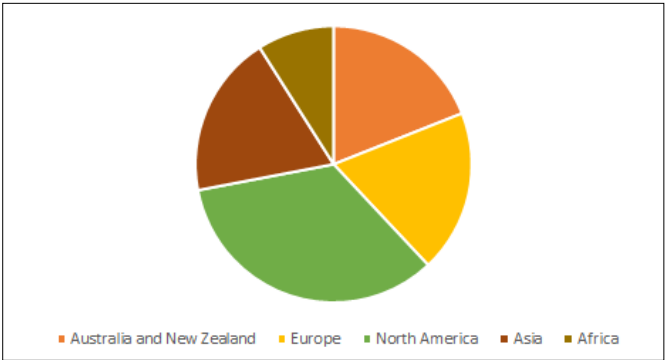


Indonesian farmers build a cistern at the Bali Appropriate Technology Institute (BATI)

## International Alliance for Localization (IAL)

Kristen Steele, Associate Programs Director

Since its official launch in 2014, the IAL has attracted individual and organizational members from more than 65 countries. However, we know that the IAL still has a lot of untapped potential. So earlier this year, we began a project in collaboration with the NGO Netcentric Campaigns, which seeks to improve the effectiveness of networks. In order to gauge IAL successes and challenges so far, we designed and conducted a survey of the membership. We received a range of very helpful replies, including some ideas for new projects: creating more direct networking and learning opportunities, launching collaborative campaigns to oppose destructive trade, and reaching potential members from underrepresented parts of the world, especially South America and Africa. Over the coming year, we will be creating a strategic plan to implement



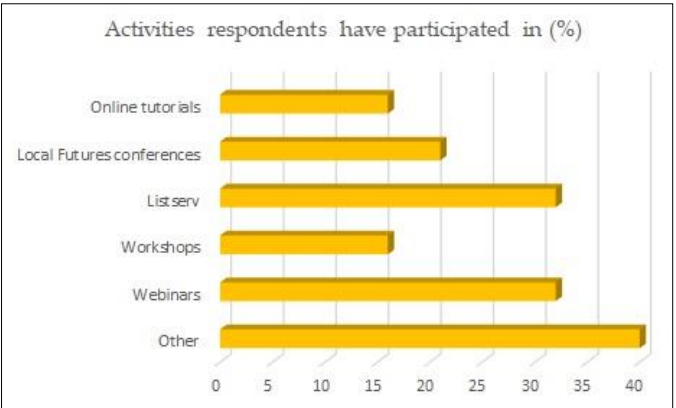
Geographical distribution of respondents to IAL membership survey

some of these ideas and expand the IAL, both in reach and effectiveness.

Respondents stated that they found IAL activities and resources useful, both professionally and personally:

*“The examples shared by IAL via email are extremely helpful. The larger task of persuading others that there will be no ‘one or two solutions’ and that technology will not likely be the source is more challenging.”*

*“Your films, podcasts and webinars have been a great source of knowledge and inspiration, and I have been able to use them as conversation starters in my work with local groups including study groups and workshops.”*



Respondents also emphasized the benefits they get from being part of such a diverse, international, grassroots network:

*"Solidarity is a primary support. Learning and doing together is another. Helps me to apply some of the insights, tools I come across in this network."*

*"Making connections with like-minded people. Solidarity and a sense of community is motivating and helps morale. Learning from the work of others."*



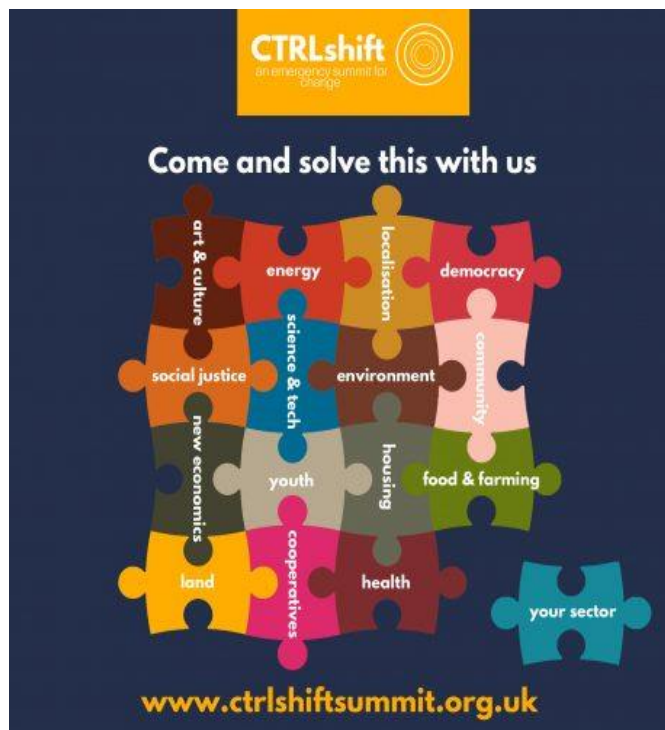
## Collaborations

Local Futures staff

### *CTRL-Shift, United Kingdom*

In the UK, Brexit is presenting a host of difficult challenges, but many in the new economy movement are working hard to turn those into opportunities for positive change. One such effort was [CTRL-Shift: An Emergency Summit for Change](http://www.ctrlshiftsummit.org.uk), held in Wigan in March 2018. Local Futures was involved from the beginning, with Associate Programs Directors Kristen Steele and Anja Lyngbaek helping to shape the event's content and format. One of our long-term volunteers Angie Polkey participated in CTRL-Shift and reported that it was a lively gathering ripe with new connections to potential collaborators and rich discussion on healthier directions for the UK economy. Participants represented many different sectors of the new economy movement, including permaculture,

sustainable housing, psychotherapy, wellbeing, co-creative arts, community building and Transition Town. Green Party MP Caroline Lucas also spoke about harnessing Brexit to bring political power back to the local level, rather than continuing to give away control to supranational and corporate-captured government bodies.



### *WEAll, Spain, US and international*

A new network, the Wellbeing Economy Alliance, or [WEAll](http://weall.org), was recently launched, with Local Futures acting as a founding partner. Anja Lyngbaek represented Local Futures at the group's initial strategic planning session in Malaga, Spain in April and Kristen Steele spoke at the official launch event in New York City in September. WEAll's stated mission is "to help bring about a transformation of the economic system, of society and of institutions so that we all prioritise shared wellbeing on a healthy planet." More than forty organizations are now members of WEAll, and Anja and Kristen are participating in ongoing discussions with other member organizations to



shape the ambitious projects to come. Well-known members include ecological economist Robert Costanza, *Doughnut Economics* author Kate Raworth, and Hunter Lovins, founder of Natural Capital Solutions. With our unique global-to-local vision, Local Futures has been pivotal in maintaining focus on the importance of localized economic structures for both human and planetary wellbeing. To hear more about the thinking behind this initiative, please check out our [Local Bites podcast](#) with Kristen and WEAll director Diego Isabel La Moneda.



Diego Isabel La Moneda introducing WEAll partner organizations at launch in New York City

### *Economics of Happiness course at Fudan University, China*

Over a period of several months, Anja Lyngbaek collaborated with Carmelo di Stefano, Senior Lecturer in design at the Shanghai Institute of Visual Arts of Fudan University, China, on the development of a sustainability course. The course was based upon Local Futures' Economics of Happiness DIY workshop toolkit, but was adapted to fit the Chinese setting.

*The Economics of Happiness* film served as a springboard for a rich discussion on the links between the global consumerism-based economy

and the mounting social and environmental problems we face. This was followed by a series of interactive exercises, games, role-plays and image mapping that encouraged students to adopt a “big picture”, holistic perspective and move beyond token consideration for the environment. Rather than tweaking design within an inherently unsustainable global economy, the students were taken on a reflective journey in the opposite direction, towards design for place-based economies operating within ecological limits. Instead of built-in obsolescence, they envisioned products meant to last a lifetime; instead of one-size-fits-all products for a homogenized global market, they imagined products for local markets using diverse local materials. The course culminated with the students organizing and running a half-day Economics of Happiness workshop for a group of non-students.

This collaborative experience was extremely rewarding, with a cross-pollination of ideas that benefited all of us. Local Futures looks forward to another collaborative project with these partners, as we co-create innovative education-for-action materials.

### *Renew Fest, Australia*

In May, Local Futures co-organized and sponsored [Renew Fest 2018](#) – a festival of ecological and



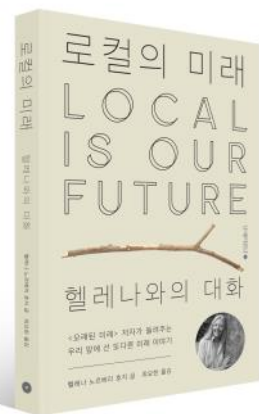
Helena Norberg-Hodge speaking at Renew Fest

social renewal held in in Mullumbimby, Australia. Helena Norberg-Hodge gave a keynote talk and spoke on a number of panels that brought together visionaries from around the world to take on issues ranging from mental health to economic instability to ecological breakdown. Local Futures sponsored the panel on “Ethical Economics”, and our Project Coordinator Henry Coleman wrote and directed a short comedic theater piece that critiqued corporate greenwashing and “green consumerism.” It was heart-warming to hear the enthusiasm for Local Futures’ message from the passionate and caring folk that Renew Fest brought together.

## Publications

Steve Gorelick, Managing Programs Director

Interviews, articles, blogs and other publications comprise an important part of our educational outreach, which is increasingly international in scope. Our booklet *Localization: Essential Steps to an Economics of Happiness*, was translated into Korean and expanded into a full book entitled *The Future of the Local: A Conversation with Helena* (no last name is required for Helena in South Korea, where she is a celebrity and *Ancient Futures* a bestseller). The publisher, Namhaebomnal, is organizing a national campaign centered on the book, which will be accompanied by a manifesto called *Local is Our Future*. Helena’s renown and the high profile of our conferences in



Jeonju give this campaign the potential to greatly expand the Korean public’s awareness of the essential principles of localization.

An article by Associate Programs Director Anja Lyngbaek has been included in a new Spanish-language UNESCO book, [\*Zapopan: Políticas culturales para el desarrollo de comunidad en áreas metropolitanas\*](#). Anja’s article, “Localization – springboard for cultural diversity and wellbeing”, is based on her talk last year at UNESCO’s conference in Guadalajara, Mexico.



We also have two new in-house books in the works. One is a compendium of our best blogs from the past decade, which taken together provide a broad view of both the social and ecological problems we face and the most strategic ways to address them. We are also working on a book on well-being, which will examine the root causes of such escalating problems as eating disorders, the epidemic of depression, and teenage suicide, and will argue that a systemic shift toward localized economies of connection and care is the best path towards psychological healing. We hope

to publish both of these in 2019.

Over the past year, interviews with Helena Norberg-Hodge appeared in a number of formats. The Australian print magazine and website [Dumbo Feather](#) featured her on their podcast, “Conversations with Extraordinary People”, and [The Future is Beautiful](#) podcast ran an interview with her titled “Escaping the Jaws of Hungry Giants”. She was also interviewed on the syndicated radio series [21st Century Radio](#) and on [Renegade TV](#).



Helena on RenegadeTV

Helena’s conversation with essayist, poet, novelist and farmer Wendell Berry was not only a Local Futures’ podcast (see page 20), it will soon appear on Dumbo Feather. Her essay “Localization: A Strategic Alternative to Globalized Authoritarianism”, was a featured article on the Netherlands-based TNI website, and her review of the book *From Global to Local: the Making of Things and the End of Globalisation* appeared in *Resurgence* magazine; both were also posted on the Local Futures blog.

Those were just two of the more than 30 blogs we posted during the year, which saw contributions from Local Futures staff as well as thinkers and activists from our circle of contacts – like Jason Hickel from The Rules, Frances Moore Lappé from the Small Planet Institute and David Bollier from the Schumacher Center for New

Economics. Topics included degrowth, the rise of authoritarianism, the broader impacts of technology, the hidden costs of global trade, effective strategies for addressing climate change, and more. Most of these were reposted by other outlets – *Counterpunch*, *Resilience*, *Common Dreams*, *Films for Action*, *Deep Green Resistance* and many others – thereby greatly expanding their reach. And as mentioned above, we will now be posting the blogs on our Medium platform as well as the Local Futures website.

Here is a quick sampling of blog posts from the past year:

### ***Localization: A Strategic Alternative to Globalized Authoritarianism***

Helena Norberg-Hodge

The rise of authoritarianism is just one of many interrelated impacts of economic globalization. Today’s global economy heightens economic insecurity, fractures communities, and undermines individual and cultural identity – thereby creating conditions that are ripe for the rise of authoritarian leaders...



### ***Can Localism Restore Sanity to Politics?***

Gracy Olmstead

If we’re to find hope and unity for our politics in this fractured era, localism may be the



perfect place to start. It hands ownership and power back to those who are most likely to feel hollowed out and powerless in the face of federal stasis...

### ***Mending a History of Discrimination through "Person-to-Person Reparations"***

Sean Keller

Although systemic economic forces make it difficult for anyone to survive as a farmer – and even harder to acquire enough land to start a farm – institutional racism and other forms of discrimination have made it all but impossible for people of color...



Harvesting alfalfa on the altiplano in Peru

### ***Farming for a Small Planet***

Frances Moore Lappé

People yearn for alternatives to industrial agriculture, but they are worried. They see large-scale operations relying on corporate-supplied chemical inputs as the only high-productivity farming model. But there is ample evidence that an alternative approach – organic agriculture, or more broadly “agroecology” – is actually the only way to ensure that all people have access to sufficient, healthful food...



Container ship of consumer goods

### ***Globalization's Deadly Footprint***

Alex Jensen

That pollution is bad for our health will come as a surprise to no one. That pollution kills at least 9 million people every year might. This is 16 percent of all deaths worldwide – 3 times more than AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria combined, and 15 times more than all wars and other forms of violence...

### ***Why Growth Can't be Green***

Jason Hickel

“Green growth” sounds like an elegant solution to an otherwise catastrophic problem. There’s just one hitch: New evidence suggests that green growth isn’t the panacea everyone has been hoping for. In fact, it isn’t even possible...

### ***The Curse of Bigness***

Christopher Ketcham

Bigness is the prejudice of American life, the axiom being that when something is big it is automatically better. That we allow corporations to grow to outrageous size is just another symptom of the disease. Bigness worship permeates every layer of the culture; it is raked into our brains

with every turn of the advertising screw; it is a totalizing force...

### ***Technology and its Discontents***

Steven Gorelick

Despite decades of hype and a continuing barrage of advertising, cracks are beginning to appear in the pro-digital consensus. The illusion that technology “unlocks compassion for our fellow human beings” has become harder to maintain in the face of what we now know: digital technologies are the basis for smart bombs, drone warfare and autonomous weaponry; they enable governments to conduct surveillance on virtually everyone, and allow corporations to gather and sell information about our habits and behavior; they permit online retailers to destroy brick-and-mortar businesses that are integral to healthy local economies...



### ***Where Time Went (and why we have so little left)***

Mark C. Taylor

With the emergence of personal computers and other digital devices in the late 1960s and early 1970s, many analysts predicted a new age in which people would be drawn together in a “global village,” where they would be freed from many of the burdens of work and would have ample leisure

time to pursue their interests. Obviously, things have not turned out that way...



### ***Bulldoze the Business School***

Martin Parker

Business schools have huge influence, yet they are also widely regarded to be intellectually fraudulent places, fostering a culture of short-termism and greed... Having taught in business schools for 20 years, I have come to believe that the best solution to these problems is to shut down business schools altogether...



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## Podcasts

Sean Keller, Media and Outreach Coordinator

In the past year we released several new episodes of the [Local Bites podcast](#). The new episodes range in length from 15 to 40 minutes and consist of interviews and recorded talks with leaders of localization efforts around the world:

- Richard Heinberg of the Post Carbon Institute discussed the history of GDP and alternative measures of societal progress
- Jay Tompt introduced the REconomy Project, a “new economy business incubator” in the UK
- Francisco Grau spoke about helping to start Feria Verde, one of the largest organic farmers’ markets in Costa Rica
- Diego Isabel La Moneda presented the Wellbeing Economies Alliance, an exciting new initiative to build a global cross-sector alliance for system change
- Wendell Berry held a far-ranging conversation with Helena Norberg-Hodge, in which they discussed technology, agriculture, local food systems, human nature, and happiness

We plan to continue releasing new episodes of Local Bites on a regular basis – roughly one episode per month. Future episodes will comprise exceptional talks from our previous Economics of Happiness conferences (supplemented by “interlude” segments that delve into greater depth on the topics discussed), and new interviews and conversations with some of the brightest minds working to bring the economy back to a human scale. Listenership for the podcast continues to be high, with over 16,000 total episode downloads and new downloads – including of older episodes – happening every week.

Photos: p1 Sean Keller; p5 Sean Keller, Alex Jensen, Lindsay Charlop; p6 Alex Jensen  
p7 Alex Jensen, Lindsay Charlop;  
p8 Marcelo Bezerra Cavalcanti



p9,10 Jeonju conference organizers; p11 Tokyo conference organizers; p12 Caroline Grindrod; p13 Carly Gayle; p15 Kristen Steele, Ingrid Pullen; p19 JD Lasica

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