



Local Futures

The Newsletter of the International Society for Ecology and Culture



Democracy, Diversity and Sustainability

by Helena Norberg-Hodge
Director

I wrote in last year's newsletter about how encouraged I felt that more and more people are waking up to the need for a fundamental change in direction in Western society. Since then, this process has accelerated dramatically. The reason? More than anything, climate change and peak oil. Even George Bush and Tony Blair seem to have woken up a bit, announcing to the world that we must find alternative sources of energy. As one might expect, their "solutions" are nuclear power and other forms of highly centralized energy – in other words, non-solutions. Nevertheless, when even the government and corporate establishment acknowledge the need for fundamental change, there is reason to feel at least cautiously optimistic.

At this crucial turning point, it is vital that

In this issue:

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- **Groundbreaking Conference in Ladakh**

we keep the needs of the majority as well as the needs of future generations well in mind. Essentially, this means adapting human needs to the needs of nature, which in turn means protecting and maintaining diversity, both biological and cultural. The worldwide spread of a petroleum-based consumer culture is destroying diversity – the foundation of life on this planet – by eliminating locally adapted foods and homogenizing architectural styles, languages and values.

In creating universal consumer needs, it also creates artificial scarcity. When children from Ladakh to Los Angeles all want to eat the same Nabisco biscuits and Nestle chocolate, the demand for identical resources grows, *continued next page*

even as thousands of plant and animal varieties are eliminated from our food systems, often becoming irretrievably lost. In India, for example, 62,000 varieties of rice alone have disappeared since the beginning of the Green Revolution. In the same way, the noose of identical Macdonald's that now encircles the globe is killing off family-owned restaurants, many of which previously served diverse foods from their own local region. We urgently need structural, political change in favor of more decentralized, localized economic activity. But this change will not be initiated by today's political elites. Rather, pressure needs to be exerted on our political leaders from the grassroots: pressure that, given a critical mass of popular support, will be irresistible. At the same time, we can all help to reweave the fabric of our own communities by supporting local producers, local farmers, local businesses adapted to diverse cultures and the specifics of place. Such a shift would insure that solutions are both equitable and sustainable: that is, for the benefit of both people and the planet.

Over the last six months we've been working on these issues with groups from around the world—including Japan, China, the Czech Republic, Peru and South Africa. It has been extremely heartening to find that there is a growing consensus that localization is the way forward: the best guarantee of real and lasting democracy, diversity and sustainability.



Avian Flu: Food Laws and Globalization

by Steven Gorelick
US Programs Director

One of the ways that large, global corporations are given an unfair advantage over smaller, more local competitors is through health, safety and environmental regulations. In many cases those regulations are in place because of Big Business abuses, but end up harming small businesses that are forced to comply with the same rules.

A case in point is the National Animal Identification System (NAIS) currently being phased in by the US Department of Agriculture. The regulation will require every owner of even one chicken, cow, sheep, horse, pig, goat or any other form of livestock to register their premises with the

government, and eventually to track the movement of each of their animals, from birth to death. The claimed purpose of the rule is to protect the food supply and public health from the threat of diseases like avian flu: with the system in place, health officials would be able to quickly identify and – if necessary – eradicate any infected animals following an outbreak. As reasonable as this may seem at first glance, a look beneath the surface tells a different story.

First, it's important to realize that avian flu is a product of the industrial food system. Although mild forms of bird flu have been present among wild birds, small-scale poultry farms and live markets for centuries, new, highly-pathogenic strains of bird flu have appeared in the last ten years or so. Those strains likely evolved in factory farms, where hundreds of thousands of closely confined, genetically identical birds provide an ideal medium for rapid spread and mutation of the virus. What's more, the escalating global trade in chicks and commercial poultry feed has enabled the disease to spread beyond the confines of those industrial operations. Industrial poultry feeds, for example, often contain "poultry litter" – a polite term for whatever is found on the floor of factory farms, including bird feces.

The reason NAIS is being proposed has little to do with protecting public health and everything to do with protecting overseas markets for American food exports. Big producers can't afford to have markets closed because of an outbreak of livestock disease, and governments will take drastic steps to avoid that possibility. In Britain, for example, 7 million sheep and cows were slaughtered to halt an outbreak of hoof and mouth disease – a non-fatal illness from which animals routinely recover – simply because other nations closed their markets to British meat and live animals until the outbreak was over. Those most affected by the slaughter were small farmers, whose entire herds – and ultimately their livelihoods – were wiped out.

NAIS will not prevent disease outbreaks, but it will instill confidence in America's food system among overseas buyers. This may be good news for the big agribusinesses involved in global trade, but the regulation is nothing but bad news for smallholders. In order to eliminate contact with wild birds – supposed carriers of the avian flu virus – many countries have already required that poultry be kept under cover. For free-range egg producers,

pastured chicken operations and owners of backyard flocks, this means the end of the line. Even worse, several Asian countries have already implemented the wholesale slaughter of poultry flocks, eliminating an important, locally-produced food from the diet of millions of villagers.

People in the agribusiness world know very well that avian flu can be used to tighten their grip on the world's food supply. Margaret Say of the USA Poultry and Egg Export Council puts it this way: "We cannot control migratory birds but we can surely work hard to close down as many backyard farms as possible." And Thailand-based transnational CP Foods, which runs factory poultry operations all over Southeast Asia, calls the avian flu outbreaks "an opportunity of development."

If our governments really want to protect us from the threat of avian flu, they should immediately ban factory-style poultry operations. They should also take active steps to promote stronger local food systems, thereby minimizing the need for cross-border shipments of animals and feed.

In most local food economies, people already know where their food is coming from and how it has been raised, making a nationwide animal identification and tracking system unnecessary.



Global Reach

by Helena Norberg-Hodge

This spring, my husband John Page and I traveled to China, Japan and South Korea for an intensive month of lecturing, networking and filming for our global-

to-local documentary. A whirlwind week in Japan included four major speaking events with audiences of 300 or more at universities and other institutions in and around Tokyo. One of the highlights was sharing the platform with Keibo Oiwa, the internationally acclaimed Professor of International Studies at Meiji Gakuin University and author (with Canadian environmentalist David Suzuki) of *The Other Japan*. Keibo has been doing pioneering work in a field that combines psychological, social and ecological issues in a cohesive and practical way. We filmed memorable footage of Keibo and his students as they planted rice in a paddy on the university campus.

We also had a very productive meeting with Takeshi Kobayashi, one of the country's leading rock stars (and the ultimate in 'cool'). He, together with Oscar award-winning musician Ryuichi Sakamoto, has set up a funding institution – Artist Power Bank – to support decentralized renewable energy and organic food and farming. The bank is largely funded by a major annual music festival that attracts 150,000 people from across the country. A large-circulation Japanese magazine published a dialogue between Kobayashi and me, at the end of which he said (to my great pleasure) that he now understood the vital importance of localization, and that the bank would henceforth support not only organic, but local food!

In Japan we also visited the village of Ogawa Machi, where a team of 'down-shifters' from Tokyo have started a fascinating local economy initiative. It combines energy production and waste reduction (a biogas plant), local food production (using compost from the biogas plant), a restaurant (using food produced with the compost) with a local currency.

In South Korea I participated in an international conference on Buddhism and Ecology organized by Dongguk University, and spoke to several hundred students at Yonsei University. I was also interviewed on television and had major coverage in the reader-owned Guardian of South Korea. I spoke at an eco-feminist workshop, and also gave a keynote address to an arts and ecology festival called Laughing Stone.

I also was invited by a group of environmentalists and activists near Brno, in the Czech Republic, to help start a local food movement there. In June, I spent several days with people from the Czech Republic and Slovakia in a beautiful old mill that was being converted into a small ecological community.

Several dozen NGO leaders, ecologists

and activists concerned with food and farming participated in a program of teaching, discussions and debate. I debated with the director of Friends of The Earth on the topic of working with the supermarkets as opposed to supporting small retailers. In another debate, with representatives from the Fair Trade movement, I highlighted the pros and cons of opening our market to the farmers from the South and the risk of economic dependency this can create.

Overall, the experience was tremendously stimulating and rewarding. I was amazed to learn how many people had been inspired by Ancient Futures and our work in Ladakh. I, in turn, was greatly inspired by the people and the localization work they are doing.

The group has since followed-up the event with the establishment of a study group as well as a translation of our local food toolkit materials.



Localization workshop in the Czech Republic

Unconventional Economics

by Kristen Steele, Researcher/Writer

In *Small is Beautiful, Big is Subsidized* ISEC's US programs director Steve Gorelick described how modern schooling homogenizes knowledge and helps to erase cultural identity; how it focuses on specialized, compartmentalized knowledge, preventing children from gaining a holistic understanding of the world; and how the skills imparted prepare children for roles as consumers and producers in a globalized economy, rather than

providing them with local knowledge useful in their own ecosystem and local economy. For all these reasons, he concluded, alternatives to conventional schooling are sorely needed.

As part of ISEC's Educational Outreach program, Steve is now teaching at just such an alternative school – Sterling College in Craftsbury, just a few miles from ISEC's Vermont office. His course is a required class in Economics and the Environment, which (as Steve teaches it) is largely a critique of conventional economic thinking.

Just how “alternative” is Sterling College? To start with, much of the food eaten by the students and faculty has been grown on the student-run organic farm that is an integral part of the school. Some of the students also take a turn working with the draft horses that supply much of the traction power for the farm. Others work in the school's woodlot, or help with maple-sugaring in the spring.

Most of the students at Sterling have chosen the school for its hands-on emphasis on food, farming, ecological issues and nature-based education. Along with typical college-level courses like Geology, Environmental Science, and Human Ecology, Sterling has offerings like Alternative Agriculture, Theology of Place, Fiber Arts (knitting, weaving, basketry), Nutrition (with a strong emphasis on local food) and Stories & Storytelling. As one of a number of colleges with a formal Work Program, all students must not only devote a certain amount of time working on campus – either on the farm, in the kitchen, in the woodlot, or in maintaining the campus grounds and buildings – they must also perform an internship, usually at a local farm or with a local environmental group. And each year, first-year students immerse themselves, quite literally, in Vermont's frigid landscape with a Winter Expedition – a week-long camping trip in the snow-covered mountains.

From Steve's first day in class it became very clear that this was not a typical school: about five or six of the students, half of them boys, were deeply immersed in knitting as the class began. It turns out that knitting, taught in the Fiber Arts class, is something many Sterling students take to with a passion. As one student pointed out, “it's the closest thing to a competitive sport we have at Sterling.”

For more information about Sterling College, see www.sterlingcollege.edu

Dropping Knowledge

In September, Helena was one of 112 activists, scientists, writers and artists from around the world invited to take part in the Table of Free Voices in Berlin. The event was organized by Dropping Knowledge, an intercultural alliance for social change. Each participant answered a hundred questions, distilled from many thousands of questions submitted by the public. Every answer was individually filmed, and the event was webcast live. Questions covered a huge range of issues: What is God's religion? Does economic globalization promote democracy or consolidate dictatorship? When might it become necessary to break the law? Who is profiting from terrorism? What is freedom? Why is it easier to get a cold can of Coca Cola than a glass of fresh water? For more information: www.droppingknowledge.org.

ISEC France

by Nicolas and Ania Louchet
Farm Project Participants, 2005



In the coming year, we will be establishing a French branch of ISEC. Already in France, many grassroots movements are advocating a shift towards localization. One of these, the *Décroissance* movement (literally "degrowth", meaning economic contraction or downscaling), was initiated by post-development thinkers, development critics and economists. The movement is attracting an increasing amount of media attention and is now represented by a political party – "Parti pour la *Décroissance*" – which intends to promote localization at the government policy level.

Awareness about peak oil is also growing in France. Green MP Yves Cochet addresses peak oil in his book *Pétrole Apocalypse*, in which he advocates smaller-scale economies as the only way to face the

coming oil crisis.

Because of the growing interest in environmental, social and economic problems, there is now a great opportunity for a more extensive debate on localization in France. With its understanding of the "big picture," ISEC can help illuminate the connections between seemingly disparate global problems. The focus will be on raising awareness by making existing ISEC materials accessible to the French public and by developing new educational tools for the French context. ISEC-France will work to strengthen communities and local economies in France as well as worldwide.



Saturday market in the Perigord Noir

Films and Publications

Although filmed over a decade ago, *Ancient Futures* is still proving to be a powerful illustration of the changes taking place in Ladakh and their relevance for the rest of the world. In fact, the message of localization is more urgent and pertinent today than ever before. In addition to daily showings of *Ancient Futures* in Ladakh, this year the film was screened at conferences, public talks and festivals in Tokyo, Amsterdam, New York City, Salt Lake City, Korea and Australia. We were particularly pleased to have *Ancient Futures* shown along with *Paradise with Side Effects* (a documentary about our Reality Tour Program) at the Himalayan Film Festival in the Netherlands.

Each year, more of our "education for action" materials are translated, reaching an even wider

global audience. Our books, reports and films have been translated into French, German, Spanish, Ladakhi, Japanese, Polish, Burmese and many other languages. Currently a non-governmental organization in China is in the process of translating both the *Ancient Futures* book and *Bringing the Food Economy Home* into Chinese.

We are designing a new page to add to our website, which will list non-English versions of our publications and films. Also provided will be contact information for publishers. We hope this will allow our non-English speaking supporters greater access to our materials.

Helena contributed articles to journals in both the West and the East. Among them were “Ecological Life *While working on my dissertation I ruminated on the similarities of culture change in Ladakh and in Otavalo, Ecuador where I have lived for 13 years. As I speak Quichua and am a fully integrated member of both Otavalo and Saraguro Ecuador I witness change from the inside out. Your book is wonderful and has been passed around in our family for years.*”

-Naomi Gabriela Maita Schwartz, Latin American and Iberian Institute, University of New Mexico

She submitted a paper on “Poverty and the Buddhist Way of Living”, to a conference at Dongguk University, Seoul, and explained the benefits of local food in the autumn newsletter of the Centre for Alternative Technology in Wales. Her biography also appeared in *Grandmothers Counsel the World: Indigenous Women Elders Offer Their Vision for our Planet*, published by Shambala Publications.



Roots of Change

For many years, we have provided a set of educational materials to groups of ordinary citizens in both the US and the UK. The main goals of our Roots of Change study group program are:

- To encourage a broad analysis of the origins and workings of the global economy.
- To promote discussion of the impact of globalization on the environment, society and the individual.
- To outline the multiple social and ecological benefits of localization.
- To generate strategies for effective local, national and international action.

The curriculum is currently being revised and will be ready for use early in the spring of 2007. As the devastating effects of globalization increase, so too does the awareness that we must shift direction. The updated materials will include documentation of shifts towards the local, as well as giving suggestions and resources for participants to more fully engage their own communities.

The Roots of Change program is designed to be useful to a wide-range of community groups – from those new to analyzing economic globalization to those who are actively working to rebuild local economies. If you’d like to host a study group in your community please contact one of the ISEC offices.

Personal Virtue and Public Responsibility

by Steve Gorelick
US Programs Director

By now there is little doubt that the effects of global warming will be calamitous within a generation or two, if not sooner. There is no way to predict precisely what the impact will be in any given place, though it is clear that human habitation will be exceedingly difficult in many areas, no longer possible in others. As a consequence, hundreds of millions of people will be displaced, creating tremendous waves of environmental refugees with nowhere to go. The Ladakhis may well be among them if the glaciers that are their only source of irrigation and drinking water disappear.

If all this comes to pass, I wonder what our children and grandchildren, living in that degraded world, will think of us and our actions today. I imagine them asking, “why didn’t you do something?”, and wonder how we might respond. We certainly can’t claim ignorance, since by now we should all be aware that climate change is real. Nor is there any shortage of suggestions about what we can do: every large environmental organization provides them, as does the mainstream media.

Unfortunately, almost all of those suggestions are focused on what we as atomized consumers can do: we should buy energy efficient appliances, drive less, turn our thermostats down, add more insulation to our homes. These are reasonable steps that people should certainly take. The problem is that these individual actions will never make a big enough difference to slow – much less reverse – the pace of climate change if at the same time our governments continue to pursue policies that spread an environmentally-destructive, energy-intensive consumer culture worldwide. Even as we are being asked to properly inflate the tires on the family car, our tax dollars are being spent on still more road-building at home, as well as massive highway projects in China, India and elsewhere in the South, all in the name of ‘development’ and trade. There is no question which of these will have the greater impact on global climate.

The implicit message in every list of “Ten Simple Things You Can Do” is that climate change can be averted if greedy, irresponsible consumers change their habits. Rarely are we asked to question, much

less work to change, the direction governments are pushing us and our economies through globalization.

Instead we are led to believe that a carpool here and a few technofixes there will allow us to have our cake and climate too. There is even reason to believe that the persistent focus on individual responses is intended to deflect our attention from deeper root causes. This was the subtext of US vice-President Dick Cheney’s claim that “conservation may be a sign of personal virtue but it is not a sufficient basis for a sound, comprehensive energy policy.” In other words, citizens can go ahead and fiddle with their thermostats, but must keep their hands off government policy.

Even in the west, most people are more victims than perpetrators of the destructive system that is destabilizing not only the climate, but our families, communities and the ecosystems we depend upon. That doesn’t absolve us from responsibility, nor does it mean that individual actions have no consequence. The corporate executives that fund bogus ‘scientific’ studies debunking global warming have placed their allegiance to the corporation above their responsibility to the planet – even to their own children. Marketing professionals whose role is to turn 3-year olds into ‘greedy’ consumers that nag their parents for Happy Meals, Barbie dolls and Reeboks also have much to answer for. To some degree we all, especially in the industrialized parts of the world, bear some responsibility. But if we fail to do the right thing now, it will not be that we neglected to add an extra layer of insulation to the water heater, but that we made a ‘personal virtue’ of our actions, rather than demanding that crucial decisions made in our names be virtuous as well.



The Ladakh Project

by Alex Jensen and Brian Emerson, Ladakh Project Coordinators



Farm Project participant harvesting hay with his host family

For over two decades, ISEC has been promoting local food as part of our multi-faceted Ladakh Project. Strengthening the local food system is crucial to creating a stable local economy, and to enabling the Ladakhis to control their own future.

Local Food Café

This year we opened a Local Food Café in Leh, the capital of Ladakh. With funds raised by Ania and Nicolas Louchet, we were able to purchase a new solar panel, hire employees to cook and serve and purchase the food to start the café. Thanks to the tireless efforts of volunteers and Women's Alliance members, the café was up and running by late summer. (Special thanks to Chris Whelan, Catie Pazandak, Shir Teper, Becky Adams) The café is currently situated under a parachute tent on a newly-constructed patio in front of the Women's Alliance building, where tourists can enjoy traditional Ladakhi cuisine prepared with fresh, local ingredients. Some of the funding will be used this autumn to stock up on staples, like cooking oil and flour, so the café will be able to use local ingredients throughout the season.

Local Food Distribution center

In collaboration with ISEC, a Ladakhi student, Iftakar, surveyed owners of restaurants, guest houses and hotels in Leh. He found that most would be interested in increasing their use of local, organically-grown ingredients. Part of the reason they don't do so now is that there is no reliable outlet to purchase these foods. We therefore organized a meeting to discuss strengthening the local agricultural economy by establishing a local foods distribution center in Leh. We are now collaborating with the Agriculture Department on this project.

Our principle focus is to maintain basic agricultural self-reliance in the villages. However, a distribution center would provide an outlet for surplus local products and therefore an added incentive to grow local varieties of crops. Young Ladakhis are leaving the villages in droves to seek jobs in the urban cash economy. There are not enough jobs to go around, and many find themselves unemployed and demoralized. We hope the creation of a consistent outlet for selling local food will encourage young Ladakhis to continue farming, providing a more secure future for themselves and their communities.



The Farm Project



Ania, with her host family, cutting hay to feed the animals in winter.

By land, by air, and by pedal power, people came from all corners of planet to this parched land of high passes and glacial peaks to participate in the Ladakh Farm Project. This year over forty women and men participated – from New Zealand, Australia, Japan, Singapore, Germany, Austria, India, Canada, the USA, Scotland, England, France, Switzerland, and in one

“It’s really eye-opening to see self-sufficiency in action. It’s food for the soul to be in the landscape.”

-Mairead Ni Chaoimh, Ireland

case, Reunion Island.

They joined the project for many reasons: to learn practical farming and handicraft skills;

to reconnect with the land; to experience a different culture; to discover what Ladakh might teach them about happiness, community and sustainability. During their month-long stay with their host families, participants were integrated into Ladakhi family life. They cooked traditional meals, gathered wild herbs in the high pasture, churned butter, made curd and cheese, spun wool, weeded the garden, took animals to pasture, milked the cows and dzomos, harvested vegetables, apricots, grass and alfalfa, made mud bricks, and danced and celebrated with the community.

Twice each month, participants came together in ISEC staff-led workshops to reflect on their experiences and to discuss “development,” globalization and localization. These conversations were full of excited chatter, thoughtful observations and anecdotes. Some

spoke of the joy of living a simpler way of life and the strength of the families. Others expressed the challenge of not speaking the language and concern about the changing status of women. Many were surprised that subsistence farmers in Ladakh have so much leisure. These days, the women and elders bear the brunt of the farm work, yet there seems to be no sharp distinction between work and play.

“My greatest satisfaction was joining the family in work and to be in some small way involved in creating so much beauty.”

-John Vars, USA

The influences of the consumer culture were easy to spot: extended families becoming increasingly nuclear; proliferation of TV and government subsidized satellite-dishes; use of skin-lightening cream. A few participants discovered textbooks that enumerate the ways traditional Ladakhi villages are “backward,” how traditional medicinal practitioners are “quacks,” and how “the majority of our rural population is poor and ignorant.” Many noticed that the cash economy is creeping into every corner of the villages and has created strange juxtapositions – such as scantily clad Bollywood pop-star posters hung in traditional kitchens above meditating me-me-les (grandfathers).



Pitting apricots in preparation for drying

Many had the embarrassing experience of finding it difficult to do tasks accomplished easily by small children. It wasn’t rare to have sat uncomfortably and silently among the family for the first week, only to



have shed tears of deep affection by the end.

Participants often found themselves struggling over their values during their stay. They appreciated the importance of diverse placed-based cultures and the models of sustainability and fulfillment that they offer, yet they sometimes encountered traditions that offended their sensibilities. Village life is a complex entanglement of traditional life and modern influences.

"I found it very rewarding both at the time and in retrospect. I appreciated the way that the workshops and discussions in Leh complemented the work in the villages."

-Jerry Grandage, Australia

countries are interested in experiencing the Ladakhi way of life, thereby helping affirm their culture. The program has evolved into a cultural exchange where villagers and participants can interact and dialogue in order to understand more deeply the challenges created by globalization.

When it was started over a decade ago, the Farm Project was intended to help Ladakhi villagers see that people from so-called "developed"



Meme-le (grandfather) of the Lagachurpon family in Basgo..



Making mud bricks

This year, we invited several Ladakhi youth to translate during the end-of-the-month meetings. Ama-les (mothers) from Ladakhi host families joined Farm Project participants for a discussion, both sides describing their experiences during the month and their impressions about the changes occurring in Ladakh. Topics included the influence of TV, formal education, roads and tourism; the parents' wishes for their children's future and the children's own

aspirations; the fate of farming; the changing role of women; and environmental problems such as rubbish and water pollution. After the dialogue, the ama-les and participants danced and feasted in true Ladakhi fashion.



Mindful Traveling

When Ladakh was opened to “development” in the 1970s, it was also opened up to tourism. Tourists reinforced the general impression purveyed by media and advertising that Westerners were rich, sophisticated and hardly ever worked. It was a major blow to Ladakhi cultural self-esteem, especially

amongst the young.
“I salute your commitment, convictions and concern for Ladakh. Your movement has helped Ladakhis to have a clearer picture of their hopes and fears. I strongly believe that Ladakhi youth and people outside of Ladakh need to know your concern, vision, wisdom and fears.”
-Stanzin Dawa,
Ladakhi NGO leader

own behavior and their very presence can be a destabilizing force for the culture, environment and Ladakh’s economy. A Ladakhi magazine published a survey last year showing that on almost all issues – from TV in hotel rooms to composting toilets – locals believe that tourists want all things Western, even though the tourists themselves overwhelmingly do not.

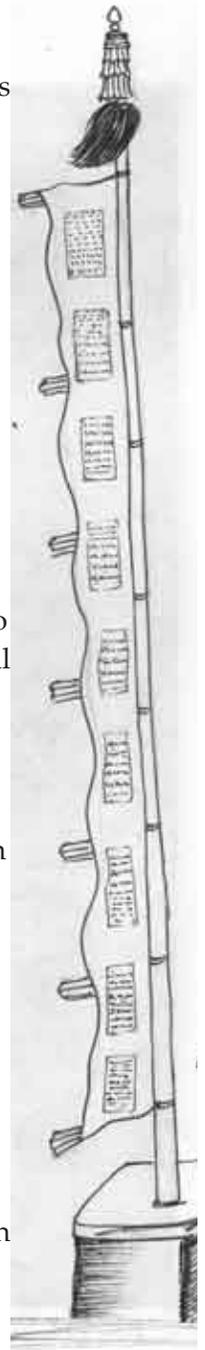
To address this discrepancy, we conceived the ‘Mindful Travel Guide.’ The purpose of the guide was manifold: to direct tourists to those establishments where environmentally friendly practices and products can be found, in order to provide them with financial and moral support; to directly reduce the environmental costs of tourism; and to foster an ethic of mindful travel generally. Our hope is that as more tourists use the guide – and communicate clearly to owners of local businesses that strong environmental/traditional credentials are important to them – the availability of sustainable services and products will steadily grow.

As part of our summer-long Tourism for Change

program, we offer daily showings of the *Ancient Futures* film, followed by a facilitated discussion. The workshops aim to help tourists see the connections between the disruptive impact of conventional development in Ladakh, and the same processes taking place in their own communities back home. There are six workshops every week, with roughly twenty people at each workshop. The post-film discussions are usually quite spirited. The majority usually responds very positively to the messages of the films, while others bring up important and challenging questions about the sorts of development choices that are ‘right’ for Ladakh.

In addition to our daily showings of *Ancient Futures*, we also screen several other relevant films, one on each day of the week: *The Future of Food*, *The End of Suburbia*, *Affluenza*, *The Corporation* and *Paradise with Side Effects*.

We were especially pleased that the airport authority agreed this year to display our tourist-oriented educational poster and brochures. These materials outline key culturally- and environmentally-sensitive behaviors for travelers in Ladakh. Since the majority of visitors to Leh pass through the airport, this means that nearly every tourist is now exposed to this important message. In the past, the airport authority was reluctant to cooperate. This shift is a good sign, showing that they are becoming aware of the importance of, as they put it, “promoting environmental values.” We plan to have our *Tourism for Change* brochure printed in French and German as well.



Beyond the Monoculture: a Groundbreaking Conference in Ladakh

This summer, ISEC hosted a unique international conference: "Beyond the Monoculture: Strengthening Local Culture, Economy, and Knowledge." More than 35 participants and 40 observers attended, including: Vandana Shiva; Eliana Amparo Apaza Espillico of PRATEC in Peru; Manish Jain of Shikshantar in India; Carol Black and Neal Marlens from the home-schooling movement in the US; Roberto Paolo Imperiali of the Circolo Culturale Ambientescienze in Italy; Yoji Kamata of the Atelier for Development and the Future in Japan; Debal Deb of the Centre for Interdisciplinary Studies in India; and Bertus Haverkort of COMPAS in The Netherlands. Rebecca Martusewicz led a team from The EcoJustice Review at Eastern Michigan University in the US.

The goal of the conference was to examine the pitfalls of globalization and the potential of localization globally. It also paved the way for launching a new International Alliance for Localization: a global partnership of people and organizations that will work to rebuild local economies. To continue the cross-fertilization of ideas that occurred during the conference, participants expressed interest in hosting future meetings on localization. On our website, we intend to post information about projects and collaborations inspired by the conference as they come to fruition. Audio/video recordings of some of the lectures and

conversations that occurred during the proceedings will also be available.

Reflections from some of the conference participants:

"I benefited greatly from hearing Helena's views about globalization and efforts to strengthen local initiatives. I am inspired and am thinking of how to infuse Abhivyakti's work with focus on localization. I plan to write in local papers about it as a starter. Many more activities will now follow. Thanks once again for inviting me and my team."

– Nitin Paranjape, Abhivyakti Community Media, India

"I learned many things at the conference and feel greatly empowered to continue the work of invigorating and strengthening campesino families to recover their wisdom and the deep knowledge that they have had for thousands of years."

– Eliana Amparo Apaza Espillico, PRATEC, Peru

"The discussions on localisation were very useful for our entire team. We had many conversations about it on the return journey. We are very keen to continue to explore both how to collaborate more closely with ISEC as well as help to build this larger alliance on localization." – Manish Jain, India

Photos: p.1, p.7 John Page; p3 A. Steele-Thompson; p5 Kristen Steele

; p4, p8-10 Ania/Nicolas Louchet Illustrations: Tubstan Paldan.



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