Note from the Director
Helena Norberg-Hodge

Over the past year, I participated in gatherings all over the world focused on economic change. Doing so has made it increasingly clear to me that deeper communication between different parts of the world is profoundly important. On my last trip to Germany and Austria, for example, I was astounded to realize just how much the localization movement has grown there since my previous visit several years ago. A conference organized by the department of the environment of the Austrian government was one sign that there is a profound re-thinking going on. There was an incredible energy and a very deep as well as holistic approach. It seems that in Austria the commitment to localization, or “regionalization” as they call it, is now widespread. It gave me a huge boost and reinforced my conviction that just a little more awareness about the central role of trade and finance de-regulation could lead to enough pressure on government to halt our disastrous path of so-called “growth”.

On my way to Europe, I happened to see in The Economist that the magazine was originally founded in order to counter protectionism. According to the narrow thinking of neo-liberal economics, “protectionism” is a dirty word. Protecting society and the environment is considered at odds with economic growth, and is therefore
taboo. However, people are increasingly realizing that the prime indicator of growth, GDP, rises with increases in illness, environmental breakdown and war, and is not only inaccurate, but fundamentally destructive.

While awareness slowly grows around the world, however, governments and corporations continue to ramp up their globalizing activities. The Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) – the latest in a long series of trade deregulation treaties – is currently being negotiated in secret by ‘stakeholders’ that include 600 global corporations. While its provisions remain shielded even from most elected representatives, leaked documents make it clear that the TPP will systematically undermine the democratic process, handing still more power to global banks and corporations.

Treaties like TPP have turned the global economy into a speculative casino that, in its focus on quick profit, supports mega-corporations like Monsanto, McDonalds and Coca Cola. This is not simply a question of good guys and bad guys: inside big corporations you can find highly ethical concerned citizens, and in smaller businesses you can find people who are narrow-minded and greedy. But the huge scale of global corporations renders the ethical values of individual employees irrelevant. This is because those corporations need to be efficient to compete with one another, and efficiency for big business means monoculture. A giant global player simply cannot deal with the diversity of seeds and plants, languages and cultural differences, microclimates and resources: it must work to erase those differences, homogenizing the planet’s cultural and biological diversity into a monoculture of products and consumers. Smaller businesses, on the other hand, can adapt to diversity. In fact, as part of localized economic systems they are structurally encouraged to diversify.

When closely examined, it is also clear that producers for localized systems are actually far more efficient. For instance, many studies have shown that smaller, diversified farms produce more food per acre and fossil-fuel calorie than large-scale monocultures. They also create less pollution and waste, while providing healthier, fresher food to consumers. Yet the majority of people in most countries has been led to believe that we need large farms, huge supermarkets, and global genetic engineering corporations to feed the world’s growing population.

The mainstream media communicates very well the ideas and decisions of governments and the business establishment, but largely ignores the countless movements that work to protect nature and society. As a result, groups within those movements are – despite the Internet – remarkably isolated from one another. I remember more than a decade ago being surprised when I realized that the environmentalists I met in Canada had never heard of Bill Moyers, while most of those in the US were unaware of David Suzuki. Both of these brilliant leaders had become household names in their respective countries, and yet even within the same language group in neighboring countries their invaluable efforts went unrecognized. Over the years, I’ve seen a similar pattern in Scandinavia and many other countries, but above all between the global North and the global South. While there are a few organizations that bridge this divide, generally there is an enormous lack of communication and understanding. This is one reason why we ran our reality tour program that brought Ladakhis to visit the West, and why we think such efforts are as important as ever.

During the past year, despite our limited resources, ISEC has worked hard to bridge these information gaps. Our ground-breaking Economics of Happiness Conference in March brought together speakers and participants from twelve countries around the world to share their experience and insights (see page 6). The Economics of Happiness film, which showcases inspiring examples of localization from five continents, has now been shown to audiences large and small in more than twenty countries (see page 10). I hope you will enjoy reading about these and other ISEC projects in this newsletter and that you will continue to support our efforts to further grassroots collaboration for a more livable and happier future.
In addition to the events we organized this past year, ISEC staff participated in a number of international meetings, film screenings and conferences. One of the highlights for ISEC’s director, Helena Norberg-Hodge, was a personal invitation from the Prime Minister of Bhutan to attend “Happiness and Well-Being: Defining a New Economic Paradigm”, a conference held at the United Nations in April. In his invitation, the Prime Minister acknowledged that the purpose of the conference “is precisely to begin to realize in practice the vision you portray so beautifully in your splendid Economics of Happiness film.”

Considered the first UN event to focus on happiness, the conference was opened by Bhutanese Prime Minister Jigmi Thinley and UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon. More than 600 delegates attended, including government leaders, economists and development experts from around the world. Speakers included Costa Rican President Laura Chinchilla, Ministers from India, Japan, Israel, Morocco, Thailand, Australia, and the United Kingdom, as well as influential economists Jeffery Sachs and Joseph Stiglitz, both previously known for their pro-globalization stance.

The Prime Minister and others at the conference made clear that we can’t simply adjust our indicators: we have to make fundamental changes to the economic system. As the UN Secretary-General said, “We need a new economic paradigm that recognizes the parity between the three pillars of sustainable development. Social, economic and environmental well-being are indivisible. Together they define gross global happiness.”

This conference was a further sign that the Bhutanese are spearheading a movement that is becoming global in scope.

Helena also participated in similarly inspiring events in Austria and Italy. In Venice, she gave a keynote speech at the Third International Conference on Degrowth for Ecological Sustainability and Social Equity, and in Vienna she spoke to a crowd of more than 600 at a conference organized by the Austrian government’s Department of the Environment. Another indication that the localization movement is growing in more conventional circles were the many economists and local and national government representatives who attended, as well as mainstream media.

The Austrians are very advanced in their awareness of the worldwide localization movement, Helena reported: “When I asked the audience if they’d heard of Via Campesina, more than half raised their hands, the highest number that I’ve ever seen in any audience. And later on I learned that in Austria people are very familiar with the small farmers association that is a member of Via Campesina, even if they don’t know the international name for the organization.”

In October, Helena was reunited with ISEC’s Associate Director, Zac Goldsmith for a special screening of The Economics of Happiness in London. Zac is now also a Member of Parliament and the event was held in the district he represents, attracting more than 400 people. Following the screening, Zac interviewed Helena onstage.

Film co-director Steven Gorelick also did some touring with The Economics of Happiness, visiting venues ranging from rural Vermont to urban Montreal. Steve also participated in post-screening Q&A sessions via Skype with groups in many parts of the world, including a high-school class in Alberta, a peace and justice organization in Philadelphia, and an environmental group in Spain.

“Social, economic and environmental well-being are indivisible. Together they define gross global happiness.”

—Ban Ki-moon, UN Secretary General
News from the Ancient Futures Association, Japan
Yoji Kamata, Chairperson

It is surprising that even after the March 11 disaster at the Fukushima Daichi nuclear power plant, the Japanese government and business sector are still following—in fact adhering even more closely to—conventional thinking on development. But it is also very encouraging that more and more committed citizens have started to move towards an “ancient futures” way of thinking, based on economic localization. The Ancient Futures Association Japan has been linking those citizens together, and working to increase their numbers.

Among the top priorities for our organization has been preparing for Helena’s visit to Tokyo, where she will accept the Goi Peace Prize. We have arranged several other events, including a screening of The Economics of Happiness (followed by a discussion with Helena) at Biwako Museum in Shiga prefecture, and a meeting and public forum with the governor of the prefecture, Dr. Yukiko Kada.

Dr. Kada is an exception to the rule about government leaders who cling to conventional economic notions: she really understands the importance of localization. She has promised her commitment to the events we have organized—not only as a person but as a prefecture. Key people and organizations in Shiga have formed a committee to prepare for the events, and more importantly to take active steps to promote localization in the prefecture.

This year we have also been working to develop learning tools to go with a short version (27 minutes) of the Ancient Futures DVD, which we created last year for use in workshops and classrooms. This project, undertaken in collaboration with the Kanagawa Development Education Center, should be finalized in 2013. In addition, we are already looking ahead to the 2014 Economics of Happiness Conference, which will take place in Japan.

On a personal note, I have moved to the Western part of Japan. The place I previously lived was only 120 km from Fukushima, and has been contaminated by radiation. I now live in a 200-year old traditional house in a remote area, and I am organizing workshops that provide essential skills for more localized living. I’m also working on starting up an ecovillage, and organizing a transition town group in the area. Please visit Japan to share our mission.

ISEC in the Media
James Miller, Outreach Coordinator

Happiness is quite the buzzword these days—measuring it, finding it, creating it. Amidst the commotion, ISEC’s view—that happiness and well-being will increase as the result of fundamental changes in the economy—is steadily finding its way into the media. In addition to media reports on the Economics of Happiness Conference and the many reviews of the film, Helena Norberg-Hodge was the subject of interviews by Scott Gast of Orion magazine, Junko Edahiro of the Institute for Studies in Happiness, Economy and Society, Joanna Harcourt-Smith of FuturePrimitive.org, Paul O’Brien on divination.com, Thom Hartmann on his television program, and Cindy Sheehan on her online “Soapbox”.

Helena’s articles appeared in Yes! Magazine (“A Tale of Two Cities: Beijing and Detroit”) and in Tikkun (“Localization: The Economics of Happiness”, and “Transforming the Economy: Linking Hands Across..."

ISEC Director wins International Peace Prize

Helena Norberg-Hodge was recently chosen to receive the Goi Peace Award—making her the first woman so honored. Presented by the Goi Peace Foundation of Japan, the prize recognizes “individuals and organizations in various fields that have contributed to the advancement of world peace and humanity.” Previous recipients include James Lovelock, Lester Brown, Bill Gates and Deepak Chopra.

Helena was selected “in recognition of her pioneering work in the new economy movement to help create a more sustainable and equitable world. Through her advocacy and educational activities promoting localization from an international perspective, Ms. Norberg-Hodge has contributed to the revitalization of cultural and biological diversity, and the strengthening of local communities and economies worldwide.”

Goi Peace Foundation

ISEC in the Media
Since the mid-90s, ISEC’s Roots of Change (RoC) study circle program has informed people in hundreds of communities worldwide about the root causes of our multiple crises, and encouraged them to take action that will lead to positive change. Some participants have gone on to start farmers’ markets, alternative currencies, co-ops, and local food councils, while others have become much more strategic in their efforts to resist corporate globalization. The RoC curriculum is comprised of 14 modules, each with articles and book excerpts from leading academics, thinkers, and activists.

In Spring 2012, ISEC launched an online version of the study group, hosted on the Economics of Happiness Social Networking Hub. The first trial group has been a great success thanks to the group’s dedicated participants and the efforts of volunteer moderator Cenk Guven. A second group is now underway, and others will be formed on a regular basis in the coming years.

Here, Cenk Guven gives his thoughts on the first online Roots of Change study group:

“I decided to join the RoC group because it is time to question ourselves, our lives, the ways we and others live and consume, to question what we have been taught at school and the bombardment of messages coming from corporate media. Before we start seeking solutions, we need to understand how the system works around us and in the world, we need to understand how we got here. The solutions to today’s problems are hidden in the past, and we will never be able to come up with real and long-term solutions if we don’t stop and look at our history. This is a challenging task as it requires ‘unlearning’ and looking at things with fresh and inquisitive eyes.

“The first Roots of Change online study group was formed in June 2012. We are 22 concerned individuals with different backgrounds living in different countries on different continents. We spend three weeks on each module following the curriculum prepared by ISEC. We learn by reading the materials provided and joining the discussions on the social hub. The members share thoughts, examples from their local communities or own industries, and recommend resources (books, articles, films, etc.) along the way. We do not claim to offer any solutions to problems (yet). Our main goal is to first understand how we got here. We also believe that every locale and culture has its own realities so some of the solutions need to be addressed locally, by local groups with local resources at the end of the study group.

“RoC is like a book club; our book/topic is the world we live in. It is a self-guided learning program and requires no academic background. The reading materials are by some of the world’s leading political, economic, and ecological thinkers. The curriculum is comprised of two main sections: ‘500 Years of Progress?’ which describes how we got where we are today, and ‘Resistance and Renewal’, which showcases ideas and initiatives that can shift the world in a more sustainable direction.

“Our online group is just the beginning of a long-term relationship and commitment to facilitate and inspire strategic action and partnerships, at local, regional and global levels.”

If you would like to join an online RoC group, please visit our website and join the social hub by going to www.theeconomicsofhappiness.org/eoh-social-hub. If you would prefer to start a face-to-face group in your area, you can get more information at www.localfutures.org/study-circle-program.

Meanwhile, a publisher in India has just released a Hindi version of Ancient Futures. The publisher, Banyan Tree, plans to do translations in Marathi, Gujirati, and other Indian languages as well. For more information, go to www.banyantreebookstore.com.

For links to interviews, articles and reviews, check out our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/theeconomicsofhappiness, or sign up for email updates by going to www.theeconomicsofhappiness.org/updates-and-newsletters.
One of the highlights of this past year was ISEC’s Economics of Happiness Conference, held in Berkeley, California at the end of March. This three-day event brought together some of the most influential leaders in the localization movement from around the world (see page 8 for list of speakers) as well as around 200 participants from twelve different countries.

The conference opened with introductions by Conference Coordinator Kristen Steele and ISEC Director Helena Norberg-Hodge, followed by a live video presentation by Bill McKibben. The evening continued with a short concert by local musician Jennifer Berezan and her band. Her beautiful and evocative performance set a festive atmosphere in the conference hall. This was followed by a powerful video presentation by Vandana Shiva, recorded especially for the event. The evening closed with a hilarious, touching and thought-provoking theatrical performance by Wes “Scoop” Nisker.

Saturday’s program included three plenary sessions beginning with a deep analysis of the economic roots of our many crises. The discussion was brought home to the personal level in the second plenary with Helena Norberg-Hodge and Annie Leonard addressing the political and personal dimensions of the shift from global to local. In the afternoon panel, the speakers began to weave in positive examples of localization from around the world. The workshops that afternoon covered a range of related topics, including facilitating a North-South dialogue, creating a new political and economic world order, and measuring progress using metrics other than GDP.

On Saturday evening, in collaboration with the Post Carbon Institute and Cutting Edge Capital, ISEC co-hosted a special presentation by Michael Shuman on the topics covered in his new book, Local Dollars, Local Sense.

Sunday morning began with more positive examples of localization in action—from the US, Mexico and Japan. The speakers on the panel presented their deeply personal involvement in creating thriving local businesses, bringing political power back to the people, redefining education in both North and South and revitalizing small-scale farming. Workshops followed on these topics, as well as a special session on the health benefits of a life-based vs. corporate-led economy.

During the lunch break, our Japanese presenters screened “Natural Farming in Japan”, a film about a farmer following the precepts of Masanobu Fukuoka, author of The One Straw Revolution. Two of the participants also gave an impromptu slideshow on the work of their organization in creating an economics of happiness in Kyrgyzstan.

The final panel of the conference emphasized
the importance of hope in building an economic system that supports happiness. Charles Eisenstein and Charles Simmons highlighted the re-emergence of resilient, interdependent communities in the US, while Megan Quinn Bachman showed how facing the root causes of our crises is the first step in creating lasting, effective change. Following her lyrical call to participate in The Great Turning, Joanna Macy engaged the audience in a spontaneous brainstorming of the tools needed to create a positive future. For ten minutes, a theater full of participants tossed their suggestions into the mix: organic agriculture, kindness, community, children, flowers, local banking, renewable energy, subsidy shifts, cooperation, more conferences like this...

At the end of the last workshop session, we transitioned into a “Collaborative Visioning Session”, where all participants had a chance to share their ideas on ISEC’s draft ‘Declaration on Localization’, first in small groups, then all participants together. The conference closed with a stunning, improvised performance by Nina Wise. Through spontaneous movement and spoken word, she summarized the previous three days, capturing the complexity and emotion, the facts and figures, the interaction and cooperation, the full experience of the conference. Moving, funny, poignant and right on target, it provided a perfect climax to an inspiring event. Helena Norberg-Hodge closed the conference with thanks to all involved.

While many participants came from San Francisco Bay Area and other parts of California, a number came from much farther away, including Mexico, Canada, England, Australia, Russia, India, and Kyrgyzstan. The participants also represented a diversity of ages and backgrounds, NGOs and academic institutions. Subsidized ticket rates allowed a number of students and others who were unable to afford the full fee to attend.

The event overall was extremely well received with 97.9% of conference attendees rating the speakers as “good” or “excellent” and 77.8% rating the workshops as “good” or “excellent” on their evaluation forms. The diversity of perspectives,
On the eve of our Economics of Happiness Conference in Berkeley, ISEC hosted a special event with back-to-back screenings of *The Economics of Happiness* and *Schooling the World*. The event, which took place at The Marsh Arts Center in Berkeley, was sold out well in advance.

Following the screening, the audience was able to comment on the films and ask questions of Helena Norberg-Hodge (Producer and co-Director of *The Economics of Happiness*), Carol Black (Director of *Schooling the World*), Gustavo Esteva (activist, author, and founder of Universidad de la Tierra in Mexico), and Manish Jain (founder of Shikshantar, The People’s Institute for Rethinking Education and Development, India). All four were also presenters at the Economics of Happiness Conference, which began the next evening. We hope to post a video of the post-film discussion on our website in the near future.

*Schooling the World* is a radical look at the goals and impacts of western-style schooling, using Ladakh as a case study. The photography is stunning, and the interviews (with Vandana Shiva, Helena Norberg-Hodge, Manish Jain, and Wade Davis) are fascinating and eye-opening. Some of the most powerful moments in the film, however, come during interviews with students and teachers in Ladakh’s “modernized” school system. This is a film not to be missed. To obtain a copy, arrange for a public screening, or for more information, go to [www.schoolingtheworld.org](http://www.schoolingtheworld.org).

---

### 2012 Conference Presenters

- Megan Quinn Bachman
- Jennifer Berezan
- Carol Black
- Martin Bourque
- Azby Brown
- Charles Eisenstein
- Gustavo Esteva
- Koyu Furusawa
- Aaron Lehmer
- Maria Gastelumendi
- Steven Gorelick
- Richard Heinberg
- Ryan Howell
- Ross Jackson
- Manish Jain
- Yoji Kamata
- Annie Leonard
- Joanna Macy
- Bill McKibben
- Stacy Mitchell
- Wes “Scoop” Nisker
- Helena Norberg-Hodge
- Vandana Shiva
- Michael Shuman
- Charles Simmons
- Sulak Sivaraksa
- Sharyle Patton
- Jon Symes
- Rebecca Tarbotton
- Al Weinrub
- Judy Wicks
- Nina Wise

---

**Economics of Happiness/Schooling the World special event**

**James Miller, Outreach Coordinator**

On the eve of our Economics of Happiness Conference in Berkeley, ISEC hosted a special event with back-to-back screenings of *The Economics of Happiness* and *Schooling the World*. The event, which took place at The Marsh Arts Center in Berkeley, was sold out well in advance.

Following the screening, the audience was able to comment on the films and ask questions of Helena Norberg-Hodge (Producer and co-Director of *The Economics of Happiness*), Carol Black (Director of *Schooling the World*), Gustavo Esteva (activist, author, and founder of Universidad de la Tierra in Mexico), and Manish Jain (founder of Shikshantar, The People’s Institute for Rethinking Education and Development, India). All four were also presenters at the Economics of Happiness Conference, which began the next evening. We hope to post a video of the post-film discussion on our website in the near future.

*Schooling the World* is a radical look at the goals and impacts of western-style schooling, using Ladakh as a case study. The photography is stunning, and the interviews (with Vandana Shiva, Helena Norberg-Hodge, Manish Jain, and Wade Davis) are fascinating and eye-opening. Some of the most powerful moments in the film, however, come during interviews with students and teachers in Ladakh’s “modernized” school system. This is a film not to be missed. To obtain a copy, arrange for a public screening, or for more information, go to [www.schoolingtheworld.org](http://www.schoolingtheworld.org).

---

**Feedback from participants:**

- “I feel rejuvenated and connected and ready to continue working towards the ‘more beautiful world’ my heart tells me is possible.”
- “It was as close to perfect as I could ask for.”
- “This was an amazing experience—one that has shown me how to take the next step in life.”
- “A phenomenal diversity in speakers and participants.”
In May 2012, ISEC collaborated with the New Economics Foundation and the Zoological Society of London to bring a unique conference to the London Zoo. The symposium, titled “Economics as if Life Mattered”, focused on the links between wildlife conservation and ongoing efforts to reshape the economy. Concerns specific to wildlife conservation are frequently left out of discussions on building the new economy, yet (as ISEC has long argued) the same steps that will lead to an economics of happiness will also help to solve our most pressing ecological problems, including the extinction crisis.

Today, over a third of all species are threatened with extinction, and the global economy is the main driving force behind this crisis. While many in the field are working to integrate economic considerations into conservation, most efforts have been focused on mitigating the inevitable outcomes of a system based on exploitation, inequality and destructive growth. Getting to the root cause of the extinction crisis by tackling the structural problems of the economy would be far more effective, and save many more species.

Eleven speakers from organizations and institutions in the UK, US, South Africa, Belgium and Mexico presented on a range of related topics, including:

- macroeconomic policy reform for sustainability
- shifting destructive EU subsidies
- marine protected areas as a core of nature-based economies
- uncovering economic incentives to destroy rather than protect species
- the usefulness of ascribing market values to protected areas
- environmental benefits of a steady state economy
- alternatives to GDP in wildlife conservation
- the link between local economics and our felt connection with the natural world

Feedback from the nearly 100 participants was overwhelmingly positive, with the main complaint being that they wished the symposium had lasted longer. This conference was just the beginning of a deep discussion about the link between the excesses of the global economy and the plight of the natural world. It is a debate in which ISEC and many of the symposium participants will continue to participate. To view abstracts and powerpoints follow link on www.localfutures.org
The Economics of Happiness, From Start to Finish
Steven Gorelick, US Program Director

It was over seven years ago that we began work on a new ISEC film – the project that eventually became The Economics of Happiness. Our earlier film, Ancient Futures, had been tremendously effective – both as a means of opening people’s eyes to the value of place-based, earth-connected ways of living, and as a tool for activists working to save their cultures and environments from the juggernaut of globalization. But this time we wanted some additional elements in the story: the new film would contain voices from all over the world, not just Ladakh; and, crucially, it would seek to reveal not only the root causes of our problems, but systemic solutions as well.

These goals were easier to decide upon than to deliver. In a documentary film just over an hour long, how were we to show that the problems in the cities and suburbs of the industrialized world have the same roots as problems in the villages of Ladakh, Peru, China, and many other countries? How could we construct a film that would weave together stories from so many different places? And on ISEC’s bare-bones budget, how could we afford to shoot footage all over the world?

As for the problem of filming in multiple locations, we are very fortunate in having a large network of contacts in every part of the world, many of whom graciously offered valuable footage to us. PRATEC, an NGO working in the Andes, provided wonderful shots of village life in Peru; British documentary filmmaker Adam Kerby offered us rare footage from remote parts of China; Carol Black and Neal Marlens shared footage from their film, Schooling the World, much of which was shot in Ladakh; acclaimed filmmaker Godfrey Reggio allowed us to use clips from his famous film Koyaanisqatsi, and several other documentary filmmakers did the same.

Along with footage we shot ourselves in Ladakh, Japan, China, the US, Australia, and Europe, we had plenty of images to work with. Settling on a structure for the film was a more difficult hurdle. Perhaps predictably, we had many false starts. One early draft highlighted the hubris behind modern notions of “progress” by using the narration from a film made by General Motors for the 1939 World’s Fair:

New ways of living and new thinking have laid the foundation for most of what is good in life today, with the promise of more tomorrow... and thus the highways of social and commercial development are widening without end or limits... providing an ever widening range of goods made ever more plentiful from East to West, from North to South...

And so on.

Another draft centered on the Decroissance (“degrowth”) movement in France. The opening shot was to feature Jujube, the donkey that accompanied a leader of the movement in his travels around France. The donkey would be seen eating a newspaper with the headline “Why the World Needs Economic Growth.” (It was never clear how we’d get the donkey to comply with this direction, but the idea was scrapped before it came to that.)

We even considered leaving behind the traditional documentary format, using instead a dramatic form in which our colleague Stephan Harding, the noted Gaian thinker, would play the role of an Everyman who believes in the values of the consumer culture, before being convinced otherwise by the film’s talking heads .... Another idea that didn’t pan out.

It wasn’t until we settled on the “Inconvenient Truths about Globalization” format that the film really took shape, allowing us to consider the many problems of the global consumer culture one by one. A similar structure shaped the second half of the film—on localization as the solution to the problems outlined in the first half. Ladakh would
be used as the primary “case study” that set up the “inconvenient truths”, and a touchstone that reinforced the assertions made by people from other parts of the world.

If the response of audiences is a reliable gauge, this structure served the film very well. Here are some typical viewer comments:

“Absolutely wonderful documentary!! I hope lots and lots of people are able to see it. I’m forever changed for it.”

“Brilliant film. [I’m] feeling empowered and want to help get the message out there. I hope whoever sees this film shares the message with their family and friends! “

“This is, hands down, the most pertinent and timely journalistic effort I have ever seen.”

Film festival judges seem to agree. Among the awards garnered by The Economics of Happiness are a “Best in Show” from the Cinema Verde Environmental Film festival, “Best Direction” from EKOFilm 2011 (in the Czech Republic), a “Golden Palm” from the Mexico Film Festival, an “Award of Merit” from the Accolade Film Competition, an “Aloha Accolade” from the Honolulu Film Awards, and both “Judges’ Choice” and “Audience Choice” awards at the Auroville (India) Film Festival.

The film has been as successful in the non-English speaking parts of the world as it has in the US, UK, and Australia. Over a dozen translations have been undertaken in the short time since the film was released. Local-language versions of the film have been screened in Japan, Germany, Austria, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, Brazil, Mexico, Peru, China, France, Quebec, and the Czech Republic. The Turkish version has appeared in several environmental film festivals, and there are translations underway in Slovenia, Croatia, Latvia, and others.

We are also pleased that the film has been embraced by those pursuing a personal/spiritual path towards change, as well as those pursuing a political/activist approach. In fact, the film was voted number two on the spiritually-focused AwareGuide website’s list of the “most transformational” films of 2011, and was cited as one of “the top 100 documentaries” of all time by the politically-focused group Films for Action. (The Economics of Happiness was the only film to appear on both lists.)

Hundreds of high schools and universities are already using the film in the classroom as a teaching tool, but perhaps the best use of the film so far has come in the form of community screenings, of which there have been nearly 1,000 worldwide. In these settings, the film works almost like a “mobile conference”, bringing some of the world’s leading thinkers and activists to rural areas, small towns and big cities alike. Most of these screenings have been organized by local NGOs, church groups, students, educators, or committed individuals who recognize the film’s ability to shed light on issues that are the focal point of local concern. While the film itself acts like a plenary session at a conference, panel presentations and audience discussion following the film act like workshops, in which issues can be delved into more deeply, with the local context in mind. In some cases, ISEC staff (usually one of the film’s co-directors) have been available to respond to questions and comments after the film – in person or via Skype –further heightening the “conference” feel of local screenings.

In the coming year we hope to expand the number of community screenings significantly. (If the film hasn’t been screened in your community, please consider organizing one by contacting us at info@economicsofhappiness.org.) We also plan to create additional materials – including discussion guides, factsheets, and additional interview footage – to deepen the film’s impact. To stay abreast of these and other developments, consider signing up for our email updates by going to www.theeconomicsofhappiness.org.
Coming Soon: The Economics of Happiness Conference 2013

From March 15-17, 2013 in Byron Bay, Australia, ISEC will be hosting its second Economics of Happiness Conference. Building on the success of our first conference on this theme last spring in Berkeley, California, this event will bring together a unique international group of speakers, each one acclaimed for their vision, activism and leadership. Under the overarching theme of economic localization, a wide range of topics will be covered, including:

- Education
- Food and farming
- Indigenous movements
- Urban revitalization
- Healthcare
- Media
- Alternative indicators
- Investing in a new economy
- Spiritual renewal
- Community-building
- Small business
- Energy for the future
- Climate change strategies
- and more…

Through an interactive program of plenaries, workshops and social and creative time, participants will have a rare opportunity to learn from and share with some of the foremost leaders in the worldwide localization movement. The conference also offers the chance to make new connections, build on current projects and find new inspiration.

Confirmed speakers

Manish Jain (India) • Winona LaDuke (United States) • Dave Rastovich (Australia) • Yoji Kamata (Japan) • Charles Eisenstein (United States) • Donnie Maclurcan (Australia) • Michael Shuman (United States) • Junko Edahiro (Japan) • Vandana Shiva (India) • Devinder Sharma (India) • Wasif Rizvi (Pakistan) • Pracha Hutanuwarat (Thailand) • Hwang Daekwon (Korea) • Anwar Fazal (Malaysia) • Mark Anielski (Canada) • Adebayo Clement Akomolafe (Nigeria) • Kerrianne Cox (Australia) • Richard Neville (Australia) • Keiko Oiwa (Japan) • James Skinner (United Kingdom) • Andrew Simms (United States) • Benjamin Villegas (Colombia) • Bill McKibben (United States) • Jan Barham (Australia) • Sonam Chuki (Bhutan)

The 2012 conference was a life-changing event for many involved, and the Economics of Happiness Conference 2013 promises to be even better. For more information and to register for the conference, please visit our website.

www.theeconomicsofhappiness.org

Photos: p1,9 Erin Wright, p3 Marielle Manahl

p6,7 Becky White and Mitchell Kulkin