Note from the Director
Helena Norberg-Hodge

It’s been an exciting year for us. We’ve hosted major events in Bangalore, India and New York City, launched a range of new initiatives, developed key partnerships – and changed our name! As always, we are sticking to our mission of strengthening local economies worldwide through education for action. The good news is we are beginning to see an unprecedented awareness of the influence of the economy on our lives. Many environmentalists and social activists are beginning to link hands to call attention to the need for economies that support the health of people and the planet. We are thrilled to be part of this shift in awareness and have plans in the works to help take the movement to the next level. I hope you enjoy reading about our work over the past year and the preview of our plans for 2015.

In this issue:

- Conference in Bangalore, India
- Voices of Hope in New York City
- ISEC is now Local Futures
- Global to Local in Ladakh

The Economics of Happiness Conference – Bangalore, India

After two successful gatherings – in Berkeley, California in 2012 and in Byron Bay, Australia in 2013 – we were pleased to bring the Economics of Happiness Conference to Bangalore, India in 2014. Organized in collaboration with Bhoomi and Shikshantar, two well-known Indian NGOs, it brought together more than 50 prominent Indian leaders, thinkers... Continued on next page
and activists, as well as speakers from Asia, Africa, Europe, USA and South America.

The conference involved two days of discussion, debate, sharing, and networking among 100 grassroots leaders from India and beyond – economists, scholars, walk-outs, writers, change-makers, visionaries, and activists working on a kaleidoscope of issues. Though their focus areas differ, they were united in their rejection of globalized development, and their affirmation of localization as the way forward. The finale of the conference was a day-long event drawing more than 1,000 participants to listen to and interact with international thought-leaders and change-makers, and to celebrate the Indian and worldwide localization movement.

Clear agreement emerged that the rise of corporate-led globalization has had devastating impacts on health, welfare, ecology, and communities worldwide. In India, where the majority is still engaged in agriculture, the central importance of food and farming is much more obvious than in the industrialized North, where people have been severed from the sources of their nourishment for many decades. Nevertheless, India is being rapidly urbanized, and city-dwellers there are becoming similarly alienated. The attendees were in agreement about the need to reverse the policies – including the liberalization of trade and investment rules – that are driving the corporatization of agriculture and mass urbanization.

One of the most valuable features of the conference was the participation of groups and individuals from both the global North and South. Local Futures has long stressed the importance of bridging the North-South divide, and doing so is needed today more than ever. Many of the conference speakers emphasized the need for deeper dialogue and collaboration, both to counter the global juggernaut and to enable localized alternatives to flourish. The conference was charged with excitement from such intercultural encounters, and many participants noted how inspiring and invigorating it was to see their local struggles linked up with what is emerging as a worldwide movement.

The conference also provided a platform from which to launch an important new India-wide initiative, Alternatives India, which aims to highlight, connect, and strengthen the many local efforts across the country that are charting a saner course into the future. The initiative was launched with a “flash mob” taking the stage and engaging the audience in a boisterous dance to the well-known song of indigenous resistance, Gaon chhobad nahin! (We will not leave our village!).

“The EOH conference has been very fruitful in giving a shape to our thinking and in finding a language to communicate in today’s context.”
~Ravi Badri
ISEC is Now Local Futures

Our organization has a rich history. It began with educational and hands-on work in Ladakh in the mid-1970s – efforts that continue to this day. These programs have made a real difference, earning numerous accolades, including the Right Livelihood Award, but we’ve always been aware that the forces affecting the Ladakhis are global in nature, undermining ecological and social health not just in Ladakh, but worldwide.

In 1991, with our work increasingly focused on addressing these global root causes, we changed our name from the Ladakh Project to the International Society for Ecology and Culture (ISEC), to reflect this expanded scope.

While we accomplished a lot under that name – international conferences, books like *Ancient Futures* and *Bringing the Food Economy Home*, films like *The Economics of Happiness*, and much more – we recently decided to change our name to a more evocative, succinct, and memorable one. After much discussion, we’ve settled on Local Futures.

Nothing else about our work has changed, and our legal name remains the same. But from now on you’ll be seeing the name Local Futures, rather than ISEC, on our masthead.

Networking and Partnerships

Over the last year, Local Futures has had the opportunity to collaborate with a number of groups and actions in North America. We became part of the New Economy Coalition, a network connecting more than 120 grassroots organizations working in different ways to build a better economy.

We were a partner organization of the historic People’s Climate March in September, which brought 400,000 people onto the streets of New York City and thousands more around the world, to demand action on climate change and “an economy that works for people and planet.”

We are also a founding member of the newly formed Bay Area Rights of Nature Alliance (BARoNA), which held its first Rights of Nature Ethics Tribunal on October 5th. With more than 250 people witnessing the proceedings, the “judges” examined violations of both human rights and nature’s rights by the fossil fuel industry, using the Richmond Chevron refinery as a case study. This local event was part of the lead-in to the next International Rights of Nature Tribunal, held December 5-6 in Lima, Peru to coincide with the 20th round of UN climate change discussions.
**Voices of Hope in a Time of Crisis**

On November 8, more than three hundred people turned out in New York City for a day of discussion around how to solve our many crises through economic localization. Voices of Hope in a Time of Crisis featured an international line-up of inspiring speakers, including Chris Hedges, Laura Flanders, Judy Wicks, Manish Jain, Bayo Akomolafe, Michael Shuman, Helena Norberg-Hodge, and many others. More than fifty partner organizations – including both national and local grassroots groups – helped shape and promote the event, and many of these were present to table and share their work. Videos of the presentations are available to view on our website.

**International Alliance for Localization**

Voices of Hope in a Time of Crisis also marked the launch of the International Alliance for Localization (IAL) – a cross-cultural network of thought-leaders, community activists and scholars from both the global North and South. Going beyond single issues, it brings together people concerned with biodiversity, climate change, social justice, peace, and inner transformation to link hands for a common cause: economic localization.

Local Futures laid the foundations for the IAL
by developing partnerships with like-minded groups in many parts of the world over more than three decades. In particular, a series of international conferences helped create the network now being formalized in the IAL: Ecological Steps to a Sustainable Future (India, 1986); The Future of Progress (Stockholm, 1992); Local Food, Global Prosperity (London, 1996); Beyond the Monoculture (India, 2006); and, beginning in 2012, an ongoing series of Economics of Happiness conferences, held so far on three continents.

The broad objectives of the IAL are:

• to link together diverse groups concerned with protecting community and the local economy

• to encourage deeper dialogue and collaboration across the North-South divide

• to strengthen and make more visible existing localization efforts around the world

• to catalyze new localization initiatives

• to create a collective voice strong enough to bring about a fundamental shift in the policies of governments – away from economic globalization towards localization

New publication

For the last decade, Shifting Direction: From Global Dependence to Local Interdependence has remained one of our most popular publications, with its simple, but detailed explanation of the shift from globalization to localization. After months of research, we have just released an updated edition under the new title Localization: Essential Steps to an Economics of Happiness. It is available for purchase from our online shop.

Planet Local

In the spring we launched Planet Local, an initiative to highlight diverse localization stories from all over the world. Our Planet Local Photo Contest invited submissions in the categories of local food, community, connection with nature, local markets, and traditional wisdom/local knowledge. More than 120 photos from fourteen different countries were entered. Together, they provide a richly textured tapestry of local economies, communities and ecosystems worldwide. Galleries of winning photos and all submissions are on our website.

The Planet Local initiative continues with weekly Facebook and website posts of real-life examples of localization in action. It also offers a curated list of local living solutions in such areas as community-based renewable energy, local food and farming, local business, eco-villages, alternative education, radical democracy, the commons, and more.

Planet Local demonstrates that the movement for localization is broader and more diverse than many people realize: it’s an intricate mosaic of small-scale solutions happening on a planet-wide scale. The series aims to inspire a politics of hope, grounded in actual on-the-ground projects that too often go unnoticed by the mainstream media.

Feedback from readers of Planet Local

“I’ve been depressed lately about the dire state of the world, war and warmongers, multinationals and corrupt politicians putting profit before people, very worrying TTIP, etc. But this post gave me hope... thank you.”

“This makes such a change from the current diet of mayhem and madness amongst us.”

“Such an incredible project! I love reading about all these inspiring initiatives through Planet Local!”
**Network-building Around the World**

This year, Local Futures Director Helena Norberg-Hodge travelled to South Korea as part of our initiative to build the International Alliance for Localization. Helena’s book, *Ancient Futures*, has been a bestseller in South Korea (about 400,000 copies sold so far), and has inspired numerous community-based projects around the country. The trip began in Seoul at the Korea Science and ICT Conference, where Helena’s plea for human-scale development provided an important counterpoint to discussions of such issues as the future of extraterrestrial exploration.

Among many other speaking events were those hosted by the Green Fund, the Gaia School, the Korean Buddhist Foundation for Development Cooperation and a number of universities, including Ewha Women’s University in Seoul – the world’s largest female educational institute. In Jeolla Province, Helena and her partner John Page met with members of the local government, environmentalists, local villagers and other stakeholder groups for roundtable discussions.

Helena also had a number of major speaking engagements in Europe and North America, including:

- The launch of Russell Brand’s new book, *Revolution*, in London. Russell quoted Helena at some length in the book, and invited her to be part of a five-person panel at this high-profile event. In October, she also recorded an episode of his widely-viewed “Trews” video blog with him.

- “Techno-Utopianism and the Fate of the Earth”, a day-long event in New York City. Helena was on a panel with Vandana Shiva, Winona LaDuke and others, looking at the relationship between technology and the many crises we face.

- A speech in the Italian parliament to members of the 5-Star Movement. Helena was invited by the Movement’s founder and inspiration, Beppe Grillo, to provide a global context for this exciting new political force. The following day, she also gave talks in Innsbruck and Kitzbuehel, Austria, and ran a two-day workshop on localization in Istanbul, Turkey.

- A keynote address to the Conference on Food Security from a Global Perspective, in Vienna, Austria, followed by a public discussion/debate with Franz Fischler, former EU Commissioner for Agriculture.

The Ladakh Project

Ladakh continues to change at a rapid pace. Many of the global dollars flooding into India are making their way to Ladakh – in the form of dramatically increased tourism, soulless “housing colonies” and mountains of plastic waste.

On the other hand, environmental awareness is more widespread in Ladakh than ever, in great measure because of our efforts there. And we are particularly gratified to see that the semi-autonomous government of Ladakh – originally headed up by the leaders of the Ladakh Ecological Development Group (LEDeG) – continues to prioritize organic agriculture and renewable energy.

When we started our work 40 years ago, it was clear that the Ladakhis were being misled by romanticized images of a western urban consumer culture, and that this in turn fueled feelings of cultural inferiority. Providing information about the realities of both conventional development and life in the west became an important part of our work – and led directly to the formation of several of Ladakh’s most important indigenous NGOs.

For example, one of the first Ladakhis we brought to the UK on a “reality tour” was Dr. Mohammed Deen. When he returned home he founded the Ladakh Environment and Health Organization (LEHO), with which we still collaborate closely today.

Dr. Deen was also one of five Ladakhis we invited to our Economics of Happiness conference in Bangalore this year (see page 2). The others included Lobzang Tsultim and Sonam Dawa, current and past directors of LEDeG (another organization
we helped to found); Sonam Wangchuk, head of the Students’ Educational and Cultural Movement of Ladakh (SECMOL); and Tsewang Rigzin, a member of Ladakh’s semi-autonomous government. All agreed that it was inspiring to link up with activists and thinkers from other parts of India and beyond, and to see their own efforts in Ladakh from a global perspective.

That global perspective – a hallmark of our work in Ladakh – was a key feature of a three-day “Global to Local” workshop we organized in collaboration with Manish Jain from Shikshantar, a Rajasthan-based NGO that is a perceptive critic of conventional development in general, and western schooling in particular. Participants came from a variety of countries – Japan, New Zealand, Netherlands, Germany, France, the US and India. Several Ladakhi students also actively participated, as well as representatives from a half-dozen Ladakhi NGOs.

The workshop consisted of presentations on globalization and waste, group activities, local food meals, evening film screenings, and discussions on localization and strategies for change. It concluded with a field trip to explore the revival of local, earthen building methods.

We also ran a shorter version of the Global to Local workshop at a school in Sasoma village. It was hosted by Rigzin Mingyur – founder of a student association in his village – who attended the original workshop and was inspired to organize another.

Other activities during the summer included:

• The organizing of weeklong farmstays with families in Likir and Hemis Shukpachen villages, for Learning from Ladakh participants. Ladakh Project Coordinator Alex Jensen was among those farming side-by-side with the Ladakhi hosts.

• Daily screenings of Local Futures’ films, including Ancient Futures, The Economics of Happiness, and Paradise with Side Effects. As in previous years, there was a very positive response from and excellent discussion with audience members. In addition to India, they came from Italy, Spain, Holland, Mexico, El Salvador, Venezuela, the UK and the United States, among other countries.

• A community media workshop for Ladakhi students, led by Faiza Khan, a Bombay-based documentary filmmaker. Khan was in Ladakh collecting footage for a project called “The People’s Archive of Rural India.”

• A tremendously popular workshop on earthen building and passive solar design: 80 people signed up for the 20 available places.

• More than 1,000 Mindful Travel brochures distributed during the tourist season. The brochure helps orient visitors to the traditional culture and encourages respectful tourism activities that benefit Ladakh’s culture and environment.

Although the pressures on Ladakh are more intense than ever before, our work there – in collaboration with like-minded Ladakhi NGOs – continues to have an impact on government policymakers and leaders, on young Ladakhis, and on the many thousands of tourists who come to the region every year.
Coming Soon: The Economics of Happiness Conference 2015

There is an alternative. In fact, there are many!

All around the world, thousands of initiatives are demonstrating that we can create a better future: resilient communities, healthier ecosystems, equitable economies. Now we need to connect the dots, get together, translate understanding into action, and build a global to local movement!

After California, Australia and India, the Economics of Happiness Conference is coming to Portland, Oregon. A hotbed of thriving localization initiatives, Portland offers an exciting location to dive deeply into the question of how to rebuild local economies, everywhere. Join us February 27 - March 1 for inspiring presentations, performances, workshops, area tours, panel discussions and more.