LOCAL FUTURES

ANNUAL REPORT 2025

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Fifty years ago, my first journey to Ladakh introduced me to a way of life that challenged many of the assumptions underpinning what we call "development." Since then I have warned about the way that economic development concentrates wealth and power, while undermining the social and ecological foundations on which all life depends.

Today, the impact of the global economy is impossible to ignore. Around the world, people are experiencing rising economic insecurity, deepening political division, and increasing disconnection from one another and the natural world. Extreme weather, toxic pollution, hunger, and forced migration are no longer distant concerns but daily realities for millions.

At the same time, there is a growing recognition that the systems we have come to depend upon are increasingly fragile. Long supply chains are breaking down. Industrial monocultures are leaving communities vulnerable. More and more people are questioning whether an economy built on endless growth can ever provide genuine security or wellbeing.

In response, the language of reform has shifted. We now hear calls for resilience, regeneration, restoration, and local solutions. Yet too often these words are used to rebrand the very system that created the problems in the first place. “Green”, “organic” and “regenerative” are increasingly invoked even as economic policies continue to favour consolidation, technological intensification, and centralised control. When the language of transformation is used to sustain business as usual, it becomes a sophisticated and dangerous form of greenwashing.

Localization, as we have long advocated, represents something far deeper. It is not simply a collection of environmental policies, but a fundamental shift in direction: all businesses need to become localised or “place-based”. Democratic process should be controlled business activity rather than the other way around. In economic terms, this means moving from dependence to resilience, from extraction to regeneration, and from growth-at-all-costs to wellbeing within ecological limits. At its heart, localization is about bringing economic power closer to home, rebuilding diversified local production, and restoring people’s ability to shape the decisions that affect their lives.

This year, our work has continued to help illuminate that path. Through films, conversations, articles, podcasts, gatherings and campaigns, we have challenged dominant economic narratives while helping people imagine and create practical alternatives.

Our forthcoming feature documentary revisits the lessons of Ladakh fifty years on, and explores their relevance to a growing global movement for living economies that serve life rather than profit. Through initiatives such as Planet Local Voices, The Bristol Conversations and Feminine Futures, we have explored not only economic transformation, but the cultural values, relationships, and worldviews that make such transformation possible.

Each of these efforts contributes to a growing web of resilience. Every time a community regains greater control over its food system, its economy or its story, that web becomes stronger. Every time people reconnect with place, with one another, and with the living world, new possibilities emerge.

As we look ahead, Local Futures remains committed to advancing a vision grounded in decentralisation, diversification, and the human scale. We are expanding both our educational and advocacy work while strengthening practical, on-the-ground localisation initiatives. Most importantly, we are continuing to amplify the voices of people and communities who are demonstrating that another future is not only possible, it is already being built.

In a time of profound uncertainty, I remain hopeful. Not because the challenges before us are small, but because I continue to meet extraordinary people who are restoring connection where there has been fragmentation, co-operation where there has been competition, and care where there has been extraction.

To my wonderful colleagues at Local Futures, and to the many individuals and communities carrying this work forward in their own places and in their own ways: thank you. The future we need will not be built from the top down, but will emerge from the ground up, through millions of acts of courage, imagination, and care.

Helena Norberg-Hodge

Photo credit: Local Futures (Economics of Happiness)

2025 AT A GLANCE

From an International Summit on localization in Ladakh to online conversations spanning six continents, this year reflected a growing desire for connection, resilience, and locally rooted solutions. People in **more than 120 countries** engaged with Local Futures' gatherings, films, podcasts, campaigns, educational resources, and community initiatives.

Over **100 World Localization Day events** took place across **53 countries**

The Planet Local Summit in Ladakh welcomed participants from **25 countries**

Local Futures resources became available in **49 languages**

The **Feminine Futures** series brought together participants from **44 countries**

The **Planet Local Voices** series concluded with **33 episodes**

More than **100,000 people** visited our websites

Local Futures delivered **over 55 talks and conversations across six continents** during 2025. Helena Norberg-Hodge gave more than 40 of these, while other team members contributed over 15 additional talks, presentations, and workshops.

A new feature documentary on Helena's life and work was filmed and entered post-production

A GROWING GLOBAL MOVEMENT

Local Futures continues to demonstrate how a small, focused organization can have global resonance.

Our newsletters reached subscribers in 122 countries. Podcasts were streamed in 115 nations. Films and videos were viewed in at least 68 countries, supported by translations in 49 languages.

While our largest audiences remain in the United States, United Kingdom, Australia, India and Canada, nearly half of our global community spans more than 100 additional countries - a reminder that the desire to rebuild resilient local economies is not confined to one region or culture.

Illustration credit: Anja Lyngbaek

This global reach is the result of an integrated approach. Throughout the year, our strategy combined grassroots mobilization, in-person gatherings, multimedia storytelling, education for action, and collaborations. Each strand reinforces the others, strengthening a movement grounded in lived experience rather than abstraction.

Across all of this work runs a common thread: the growing recognition that many of today's interconnected crises stem from ever-increasing economic centralization and extraction. Rebuilding resilient local economies requires a systemic shift towards decentralisation - adapting our human-made systems to the cultural and biological diversity on which all life depends.

WORLD LOCALIZATION DAY

What began in 2020 as a coordinated day of action has grown into a truly global celebration of local resilience.

EVENTS

In 2025, World Localization Day mobilized over a 100 events across 53 countries and six continents.

From Sri Lanka to Scotland, Brazil to Bhutan, communities organized film screenings, seed swaps, panel discussions, local food feasts, workshops, and online gatherings with localization in focus. Seventy-two organizations formally partnered in the campaign, alongside a host of individual organizers. The diversity of events reflected the nature of the movement itself: practical, creative, joyful, and rooted in place.

PODCAST SERIES

Local Futures amplified the voices of community activists and localization leaders through a unique three-part World Localization Extravaganza podcast series, bringing together 15 contributors from around the world to share real-world examples of localization in action. Professional narration and audio post-production wove these diverse perspectives into a cohesive and engaging three-episode series. Around 2,000 people tuned in at launch, with additional listeners discovering the series in the months since. The series was also broadcast on community radio in Australia. The project received enthusiastic feedback for its storytelling and its ability to bring together diverse voices from around the world.

LOCALIZATION GUIDE

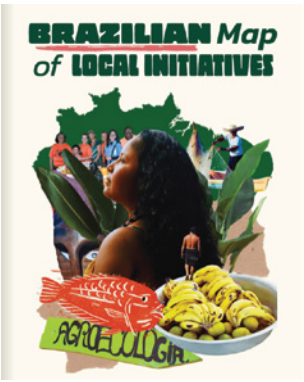
An expanded Localization Action Guide, featuring a brand-new section focused on reclaiming education in service of people and the Planet, was released as part of the WLD campaign. The expanded Guide received thousands of visits in June, offering concrete tools for community organizing, local economic initiatives, and educational transformation.

Illustration credit: Josie Ford

BRAZIL MAPPING LOCALIZATION IN ACTION

Brazil's participation stood out as a powerful example of localization in practice. Serving as the country's ambassador, EcoUniversidade, in collaboration with Local Futures, mapped 95 initiatives across all regions - Brazilian Map of Local Initiatives - highlighting projects covering agroecology, food sovereignty, traditional knowledge, and community-based enterprise.

From Indigenous and quilombola territories in the North to agroecological networks in the South and educational hubs in urban centres of the Southeast, these initiatives demonstrate that localization goes far beyond buying local. It reconnects communities to land, culture and collective decision-making, strengthening resilience in the face of ecological and economic pressures.



Across social media platforms, World Localization Day reached tens of thousands, bringing new audiences into the movement. Media coverage in journals, radio programs and regional publications further amplified its message.

Above all, the campaign affirmed a simple but powerful truth: around the world, people are choosing collaboration over competition, community over isolation, and local resilience over fragile global dependence.

PLANET LOCAL SUMMIT IN LADAKH

From September 3rd to 7th, Local Futures hosted a Planet Local Summit in Ladakh, India, marking 50 years since Local Futures' founder, Helena Norberg-Hodge, first visited.

The Summit brought together changemakers to engage in immersive dialogue, future-focused strategy, hands-on experience, and cultural exploration, with a focus on building resilient economies and communities that respect ecological boundaries.

Bringing together participants from 25 countries, the Summit combined village visits, workshops, talks, conversations, and cultural celebrations. Themes included food sovereignty, alternative education, cooperative economies, grassroots democracy, and community responses to climate disruption.

Photo credit: Alex Jensen

The setting itself underscored the urgency of the work, with extreme weather, including heavy rains and unseasonable cold, impacting both the event and local agriculture. These challenges highlighted the very issues the Summit addressed: climate and systemic crises, global extractivism, and the importance of local, ecological solutions being implemented worldwide.

Photo credit: Tashi Phuntsog

A total of 28 in-depth interviews were recorded during the Summit, bringing together voices from Ladakh and around the world. These conversations form the basis of a second Planet Local Voices video and podcast series to be released in 2026.

In October, Local Futures convened an online post-Summit "Hub" meeting with key participants from the Summit, to advance further collaboration. The participants shared regional updates, explored the value of replicating Brazil's mapping of localization initiatives in other regions, and discussed the possibility of co-hosting future Planet Local-style gatherings, and specific campaigns, including a "free trade" awareness-raising initiative.

Emphasizing cross-regional knowledge exchange and creative advocacy, the meeting strengthened partnerships and ongoing collaboration among diverse regions including Ladakh, Nepal, US, Vietnam, Brazil and Sweden.

Photo credit: Tashi Phuntsog

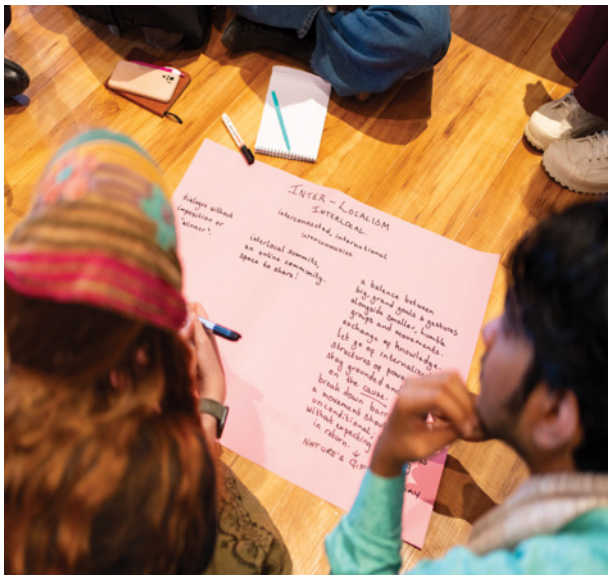


Photo credit: Tashi Phuntsog

LOCAL FUTURES LADAKH

Beyond the Summit, 2025 was a year of deepening roots in Ladakh.

In April, Local Futures Ladakh was registered as a not-for-profit organization in India, an important step in strengthening long-term local leadership and expanding work on the ground. The team re-established its office at the Women's Alliance in Leh, expanded youth volunteer and internship programs, and hosted research fellows and international learning groups.

Photo credit: Kunzang Deachen

Weekly film screenings and community dialogue sessions explored issues such as waste, food systems, tourism and community wellbeing. In May, our team hosted *Seed of Reflection: Journey to the Future through the Environment*, a two-day intergenerational workshop exploring the interconnectedness of self, community and nature.

Storytelling and media remained central. Ladakhi and Hindi versions of *Trade Gone Mad* were created, while local team members continued developing film-making and media skills to support community-based storytelling in the region.

Local Futures Ladakh also contributed to wider conversations around development and self-determination, through projects including the *People's Charter of Tourism*, and writing focused on ecological resilience and cultural preservation.

SPECIAL LADAKH AWARD

Helena received a Special Appreciation Award at the 9th dPal rNgam Dus-sTon celebration in Ladakh, honouring her decades of collaboration with Ladakhi communities and her lifelong efforts to protect and strengthen Ladakh's cultural and ecological heritage. She is the only foreigner ever to have received the award.

The celebration drew around 10,000 people and transformed Leh into a vibrant expression of Ladakhi culture, with traditional dress, music, ceremony and gatherings unfolding across the town.

Photo credit: Tashi Phuntsog

AUDIVISUAL STORYTELLING FOR SYSTEMIC CHANGE

At the heart of Local Futures' work lies a simple insight: changing systems requires changing stories. In 2025, we continued investing in film, podcasts and digital storytelling that challenge dominant economic narratives, while amplifying alternatives emerging around the world.

THEY CALL IT PROGRESS

In April, we released They Call It Progress, a short animation produced with Studio RAA exploring the hidden social and ecological costs of an economy built around GDP growth.

Blending humor with systemic critique, the animation was accompanied by a satirical companion piece, *10 Things You Can Do to Serve the Corporate Growth Economy,* which quickly found resonance in classrooms, community discussions and online audiences. A social media reel promoting the animation reached more than 57,000 views, helping to extend its message to a wider public audience.

Illustration credit: RAA Studio

HELENA: THE WOMAN WHO SPARKED A GLOBAL MOVEMENT

Santabelva, an Italian filmmaking collective, produced a feature-length documentary, *Helena: The Woman Who Sparked A Global Movement*.

The film traces Helena's life and work - from her early years in Ladakh to the global emergence of the localization movement - through interviews, archival footage, animation, and scenes filmed across Ladakh, the UK and Spain.

It offers a timely reflection on the growing global search for more connected and life-serving ways of living, and is scheduled for release in 2026.

Photo credit: Santabelva

PLANET LOCAL VOICES

This year also marked the conclusion of Planet Local Voices, a two-year podcast and video series originally launched following the 2023 Planet Local Summit in Bristol.

Illustration credit: Jonathan Tomlinson

Across 33 episodes featuring voices from 15 countries, conversations explored localization, ecological economics, education, regenerative agriculture, grassroots democracy, and the growing crisis of social fragmentation and disconnection.

By the end of 2025, the series had generated more than 93,000 views and 28,000 podcast listens, and over 600,000 Instagram views. Conversations exploring meaning, belonging and mental health, particularly the episode with Iain McGilchrist, resonated strongly.

THE BRISTOL CONVERSATIONS

Following the completion of *Planet Local Voices*, we released The Bristol Conversations, an eight-part mini-series recorded post-Bristol Summit.

Where Planet Local Voices emphasized breadth and global diversity, this series offered deeper, more personal dialogues between Helena and eight visionary thinkers. Themes included cultural renewal, the restoration of community, and the psychological dimensions of systemic change.

Released between July and December, the series received more than 10,500 views and listens by year's end.

Illustration credit: Josie Ford

Together, these projects reflect a growing effort to create media that not only informs, but reconnects people to a deeper sense of place, community, and possibility.

FEMININE FUTURES

Illustration credit: Josie Ford

In a time shaped by speed, extraction, disconnection and rising burnout, our seven-part online series Feminine Futures asked a different question: what kinds of societies might emerge if we placed care, community and the living world more firmly at the centre?

Over two months, the series brought together seven women leaders working across ecological, economic, psychological, spiritual and educational fields, to explore how dominant models of progress might be reimagined through values of care, interdependence and community.

More than 2,200 people signed up for the series, with participants joining live sessions from 44 countries. Again and again, conversations returned to similar themes: the need for stronger human connection, more meaningful ways of living, and systems that support rather than exhaust life. Recordings were later released publicly, extending the conversations to wider audiences around the world.

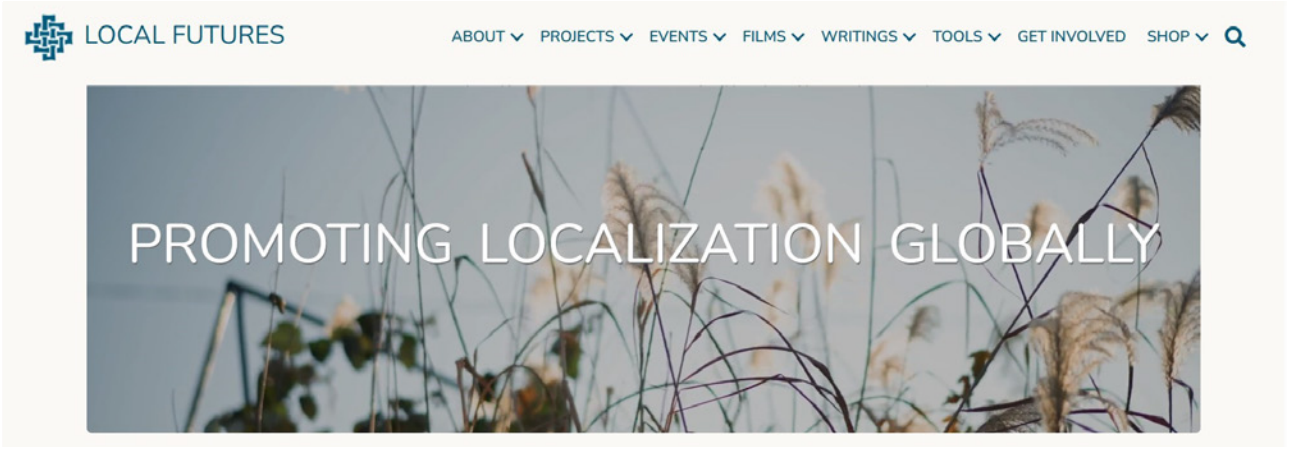
DIGITAL MEDIA OUTREACH AND IMPACTS

WEBSITES

We continued expanding our digital reach, with more than 100,000 visitors accessing our websites during the year.

A major back-end upgrade to the Local Futures website strengthened security, improved performance, and created greater flexibility for future design and user experience enhancements. Together with improvements to website navigation, these changes made our films, resources, campaigns and educational materials easier to access and share globally, contributing to a 19% increase in page views and an 18% rise in visitors to the Local Futures website. Dedicated platforms for World Localization Day and the Planet Local Summit in Ladakh brought thousands of new visitors into the localization movement.

Traffic to Helena Norberg-Hodge's website increased by 13%, particularly around major events and media releases. The website also attracted a significant number of new visitors, with 21% of users accessing the site for the first time, demonstrating its continued reach to new audiences.



SOCIAL MEDIA

Local Futures' social media channels connected with over a million people worldwide throughout 2025.

YouTube continued to be an important platform for longer-form educational content, generating more than 170,000 views and over 17,000 hours of watch time across films, interviews, talks, and podcast conversations.

Short-form video also played a growing role in reaching new audiences. The animation "They Call it Progress" gathered 57,400 views. An instagram reel featuring Brazilian researcher Camila Moreno discussing carbon and climate reached more than 156,000 views in just nine days, with over half the audience discovering Local Futures for the first time. Another reel featuring Helena Norberg-Hodge in collaboration with Nate Hagens titled "How Christianity led to Consumer Culture" has received 668,000 views to date.

Across Instagram, TikTok, LinkedIn, Mastodon, Bluesky and other platforms, we continued sharing films, interviews, educational resources, event coverage, and stories of localization in action from around the world.

NEWSLETTERS

Local Futures sent 32 newsletters to more than 10,800 subscribers across 122 countries, maintaining a strong average open rate of 49% (well above the norm of 15-35%).

The newsletters explored a wide range of topics: thoughtful commentary on critical global issues including COP30, IAASTD findings on sustainable food systems and corporate narratives around feeding the world, news about our new resources and events including the Planet Local Summit in Ladakh, World Localization Day, the Bristol Conversations and the Feminine Futures series; tributes honoring colleagues such as Jane Goodall and Joanna Macy, and more.

Illustration credit: Imam Fathoni, vecteezy.com

BLOG

Local Futures blog published 19 essays, featuring contributions from team members and collaborators around the world.

Articles explored the impacts of free trade and corporate globalization, agroecological approaches, Indigenous knowledge systems, alternative education models, and cultural preservation - from rescuing native cotton in Mexico to revitalizing agrarian economies in Transylvania.

Released every few weeks, the blog continued to connect big-picture systemic analysis with grounded examples of local renewal.

TRANSLATIONS & ACCESSIBILITY

Thanks to our dedicated volunteer translators, Local Futures' films and animations are now available in 49 languages.

2025 highlights include new translations of *Closer to Home* (Farsi), *The Power of Local* (ten languages including Hebrew, Chinese and Thai), and *Ancient Futures* (Bangla and Korean). *Trade Gone Mad*, released in English in late 2024, is now available in 18 languages.

Making these resources freely available in many languages has helped us connect with people and groups across cultures, regions, and continents.

COLLABORATION & PARTNERSHIPS

Local Futures team contributed to a range of events hosted by other groups and organizations, as part of our ongoing effort to collaborate with a broad movement for systemic change.

Helena delivered more than 40 keynote talks and panel discussions across six continents, engaging tens of thousands of people. Highlights included WOMADelaide Planet Talks (Adelaide), Toniic and Wisdom & Action Forum (Melbourne), Spiritual Ecology Festival (London), Schumacher Summer College, Ibiza Regeneration Events, and multi-day programmes in Tasmania, Mumbai, and Ladakh. She also expanded online engagement through workshops such as Women in Systems Thinking, NENA Localisation Hub, and the Schumacher Japan Fest online launch.

Photo credit: Anja Light

Helena also appeared on top ecological and systems-thinking platforms including *Team Human*, *The Great Simplification*, and *Dr. Ron Ehrlich Podcast*. Instagram Lives, interviews, and long-form releases expanded her voice further.

Other team members contributed to workshops, conferences, film projects, educational programmes, and grassroots initiatives around the world:

Ladakh – Kunzang Deachen led a filmmaking workshop to strengthen Local Futures Ladakh's video documentation and joined a community-based learning tourism program in Vietnam. Padma Rigzin delivered a talk, *Listening to Water: Understanding Climate, Culture, and Community through Water*, at a LAMO (Ladakh Media Organization) event.

India – Alex Jensen and Kunzang Deachen participated in the Vikalp Sangam (Alternatives Confluence) General Assembly at the campus of Deccan Development Society in Telangana, alongside more than 90 organisations across India exploring alternatives to conventional development.

Slovenia – Marjana Kos hosted a session on finance and economy at Permafest, Slovenia's first permaculture festival.

Australia – Sally Cusack co-organised *Thriving in Uncertain Times* in Byron Bay, featuring film screenings and a panel with Helena and Damon Gameau. Henry Coleman delivered a systems-change talk during Climate Action Week Sydney, co-developed a three-part webinar series on localisation with NENA (New Economy Network Australia), and presented at the NENA conference with Anja Light.

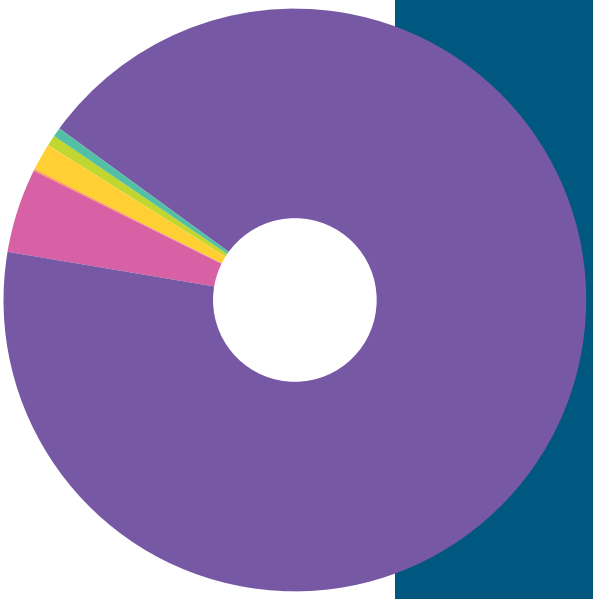
Latin America – Anja Lyngbaek spoke and co-led workshops at the Futuros Posibles conference in Córdoba, Argentina, participated in an educators' retreat, taught the local economics module in the new-economy diploma program with PINE and the University of Córdoba, and gave an online talk to students at La Universidad del Medio Ambiente in Mexico.

Photo credit: PINE

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

Total Revenue $661,528

- Donations 612,821
- Royalties and writing fees 3,317
- Lecture and speaking fees 4,020
- Sale of publications and videos 8,986
- Screening, streaming and broadcast fees 1,503
- Interest and investment income 30,881

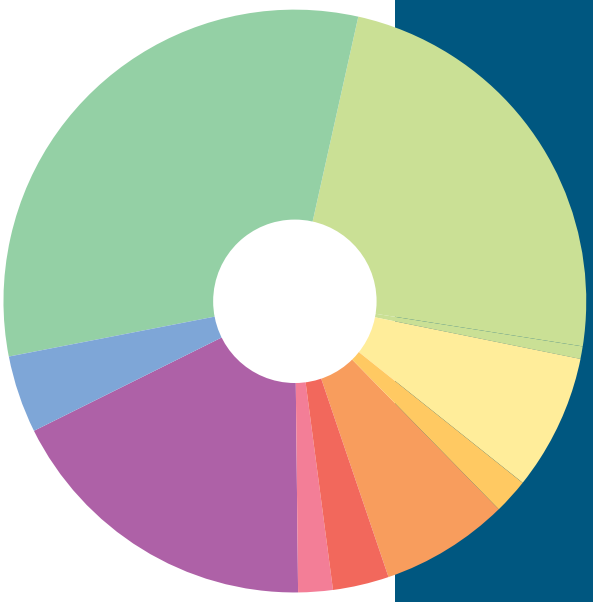


Total Expenses $651,915

- Management and administrative 46,468
- Fundraising 12,690

Program Expenses:

- World Localization Day 49,123
- Global to Local programs 161,000
- Film projects 205,623
- Ladakh Project 27,996
- Ladakh Summit 116,231
- Australia localization projects 12,472
- Flow Fund grant program 20,312



TEAM AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Local Futures has a dedicated team of 16 staff, supported by volunteers and specialists on specific projects.

LOCAL FUTURES TEAM

Helena Norberg-Hodge	*Founder and Director*
John Page	*Creative Content Director*
Steve Gorelick	*Financial Officer, Board of Directors*
Anja Lyngbaek	*Managing and Programs Director*
Marjana Kos	*Executive Assistant*
Henry Coleman	*Project Coordinator*
Alex Jensen	*Researcher and Project Coordinator*
Sally Cusack	*Researcher and Project Coordinator*
Jonathan Tomlinson	*Social Media Coordinator*
Anja Light	*Social Media Coordinator*
Samantha Salmon	*Webmaster and Product Manager*
Bertrand Raguet	*Audio and Visual Editor*
Nina Karnikowski	*Writer and Communications Strategist*
Kunzang Deachen	*Ladakh Project Associate*
Padma Rigzin	*Ladakh Project Associate*
Stanzin Dothon	*Ladakh Project Associate*

SPECIAL PROJECTS

Thais Mantovani	*Mapping and movement-building in Brazil*
Maren Morgan and Jake Marquez	*Interviews and video projects*
Josephine Ford and Studio RAA	*Illustrations and animation*

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to the many volunteers who helped with the Planet Local Summit in Ladakh, and not least to our long-term volunteer translators.

Illustration credit: Imam Fathoni, vecteezy.com

LOCAL FUTURES

CREDITS

Written by: Anja Lyngbaek and Local Futures Team

Designed by: Nathalie Mansour

Photo credits: Front cover - John Page | Back cover - Niharika Mathema

Local Futures/International Society for Ecology and Culture
www.localfutures.org | info@localfutures.org
USA: PO Box 36, East Hardwick, VT 05836, Tel: +1 (802) 307 9502

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