DIRECTOR’S NOTE

The truth is, globalisation has no future. Because of it, political stability is a thing of the past; climate chaos is intensifying; anxiety disorders are of epidemic proportions; and extremism and fundamentalism are becoming the norm. And yet we cling to the wreckage. Politicians of every hue continue to be in thrall to global corporations. To challenge “free trade”, which gives global players ever more power, is all but unthinkable.

But challenge it we must. And replace it. Having identified the need for greater awareness of the link between the economy and environmental and social issues, we continued over the past year to connect allies and offer big picture education through online offerings and in-person events. As always, we promote economic localisation as the antidote to the dead-end path of corporate-led expansionism, and our mission to nurture a personal and collective commitment to this movement is well underway.
This year we hosted two major events and created short films, web-based materials and workshops. Through this, we provided opportunities for networks to work together to resist the monoculture, while simultaneously building the fabric essential for human and ecological well-being.

At the forefront of our efforts in 2023 was the successful launch of our largest in-person event to date, the Planet Local Summit. With a palpable vibrancy, this three-day conference celebrated the remarkable achievements in localisation already happening around the world, while also raising the call for structural change to support a dramatic shift towards the local. Through talks led by speakers of diverse backgrounds and disciplines, participants of all ages joined together to network, learn, and be inspired by the knowledge that the future will be local.

And the good news is that it is already happening. Under the radar of the corporate media, the worldwide localisation movement is gathering momentum. On every continent people are coming together to take back control of their own economies in order to reweave their connections to community and to the living world.

I am proud of the work Local Futures has contributed to this movement: the inspiration and momentum of the Planet Local Summit, our fourth annual World Localization Day, ongoing work in Ladakh, and the publication of the audiobook Local is Our Future: Steps to an Economics of Happiness.

With a future certain to bring more upheavals of various descriptions, our work inspires others to not only believe in, but work toward the possibility of real systems change. Despite our limited funding and very small team, our organisational reach and influence continues to expand. Our network is widening, and the movement is growing ever stronger.

Thank you for being part of it.

Helena Norberg-Hodge
Founding Director, Local Futures
In September, our much-anticipated three-day Planet Local Summit was a great success, proving to be our largest event to date with more than 1000 people attending in person and up to 1700 joining by livestream. With speakers and participants representing more than 70 countries, the Summit celebrated the remarkable achievements in localisation already happening around the world, while also raising the call for structural change to support a dramatic shift towards the local. Through talks, panel discussions, and breakout groups led by speakers from diverse backgrounds and disciplines, participants joined together to network, learn, and be inspired.

To broaden our reach, the event was professionally live-streamed, enabling international participants to join in the event if they were unable to travel to England. This served a dual purpose, as many of those recordings have also now been posted on our website for future viewing. Our livestream coverage of the event accumulated much interest, with 3,815 live views over 3 days, and over 6,500 post-event views, and counting. Local Futures ambassador Nathalie Kelley produced two short video clips prior to the Summit, both of which were shared with her Instagram followers as part of our promotional efforts.

With the intention of creating lasting resources as a result of the Summit, we arranged for filming of plenary speeches, workshop sessions, and interviews with key speakers which will contribute to future podcasts and films.

Summit event materials included a free booklet, *A Global Movement Comes of Age*, distilling Helena Norberg-Hodge’s big-picture message into a few hundred words, which was distributed to all attendees. Blending poetry with political critique, and philosophical reflections with a call to action, the booklet is intended to be a helpful companion to those thinking globally and acting locally.
Networking opportunities were strategically integrated throughout the event, beginning with an exclusive kick-off dinner at Square Food Foundation. Square Food chefs showcased locally-sourced cuisine, underscoring the importance of socially and environmentally responsible food choices, while Local Futures staff set the stage for the weekend’s proceedings. A dedicated funders’ lunch on Saturday provided a platform for partners and supporters to celebrate achievements and strategize future goals.
Following the event, key speakers convened for **strategic networking sessions** to plan collaborative initiatives aimed at driving impactful change. The first day, set in Bristol, brought over 50 Summit speakers together with Local Futures staff to distil key take-aways from the weekend and develop community action plans. This supplementary session offered a unique platform for global thinkers and activists to connect in a more intimate setting, exchanging ideas on enhancing our collective voice and advancing a global-to-local movement. Several speakers then accompanied our founder for an additional two days at a private estate in Badminton, intensifying collaborative efforts and offering strategic guidance for Local Futures’ upcoming initiatives.
REALITY TOURS

We also built upon a legacy that began in 1982 with the hosting of Reality Tours aimed at exposing rising Ladakhi leaders to the realities of Western urban life. These tours are designed not only to unveil the challenges such as crime, unemployment, loneliness, and alienation that exist beneath the surface of consumer culture, but also to showcase initiatives dedicated to revitalising community bonds and environmental stewardship. Over the years, our efforts have expanded to include fostering a deeper understanding between Western and Global South communities, facilitating visits for individuals from the latter to participate in these eye-opening tours. In Ladakh, Reality Tours have allowed Western participants to immerse themselves in traditional village life, fostering mutual appreciation and countering negative stereotypes perpetuated by mainstream Western media.

After the Planet Local Summit, we organised a special Reality Tour in Devon, for Kunzang Deachen, who has been instrumental in leading Local Futures Ladakh over the past five years, and Dolma Tsering, former president of the Women’s Alliance of Ladakh. The tour included visits to a local food cafe, a zero waste shop, a repair cafe, a community kitchen, a local market, and a nature preserve, offering invaluable insights and inspiration for further community-driven initiatives. The visit to Schumacher College and meeting with Satish Kumar was also very meaningful and memorable.
In June, Local Futures convened participants from 27 countries through World Localization Day (WLD) to celebrate the emerging worldwide localisation movement and strengthen it by encouraging international collaboration. Throughout the month of June, more than 100 initiatives and events were shared from around the world that foster ecological economies, thriving communities, and healthy local food systems. Examples of events were: environmental festivals and solstice celebrations, seed swaps and workshops, online talks, film screenings, and neighbourhood feasts.

The month-long event culminated in a webinar: “Localizing Globally: Building a worldwide movement” hosted by Helena and Local Futures Project Coordinator, Henry Coleman. This event featured Transition Town and New Economy movement leaders and other localisation pioneers from countries as diverse as India, Nepal, Philippines, Japan, Zimbabwe, Benin, Palestine, Macedonia, Brazil, Spain, and the UK.

The enthusiasm for localisation culminated with the Tignano Cultural Committee awarding Helena with the Tignano Environmental Prize in Italy. In honouring her achievements, the committee wrote “We believe that your work is fundamental to understanding the ruinous consequences of globalisation for our planet, our economy, and human relations. Your work on the defence of local cultures and economies is essential to remind each of us of the importance of our roots and identity, respecting all diversity, to promote biodiversity and brotherhood among peoples.” At this occasion, a new, edited version of Ancient Futures was published by Giannozzo Pucci / Libreria Editrice Fiorentina SRL.

From an outreach perspective, it’s worth noting that World Localization Day 2023 garnered over 10,000 web page visits, including 8,495 unique visitors, 5,000 of whom were new to Local Futures. In response to the WLD initiative, members of the Local Futures team from Australia, USA and Ladakh have been invited to participate in webinars hosted by organisations such as Resurgence (UK), Reconomistas (UK), The Sloth Club (Japan), Alliance for a Local Future (Mexico), Village Square India, and International Feminists for a Gift Economy (USA).
LADAKH

Within Local Futures’ commitment to advancing economic localization—shifting towards place-based, ecological, and human-scale activities—our Ladakh initiative champions traditional knowledge, skills, practices, and cultures.

To kick off the year, our Ladakh team revitalised the vegetable garden at Women’s Alliance Ladakh, which had previously been dormant for many years. We collaborated with talented young natural builders from the local enterprise “Earth Building” to host a weeklong workshop restoring a historic house in Chuchot village using exclusively natural local materials, primarily earth. This restored house will serve as a venue for future Local Futures workshops.

The Chuchot building project culminated in the creation of a compelling video highlighting the significance of utilising local and sustainable building methods and materials. This issue transcends Ladakh, resonating globally as traditional materials like mud, straw, wood, cob, and thatch are increasingly replaced by costly and energy-intensive alternatives such as concrete and steel. Watch our video “Chuchot House Restoration”.

In April, as part of a series of Local Futures engagements designed to bring like-minded people together to discuss and address eco-cultural distress in Ladakh, we held a Khunak Gathering (a traditional gathering on tea) at Women’s Alliance Ladakh. Local Futures hosted regular film screenings and accompanying discussions throughout the year at this community hub, including a series of online discussion sessions on topics such as gift economy and carrying capacity study in an effort to understand the limitations of resources in places like Ladakh.

In our ongoing collaboration with VCIL, (the Vietnamese Community of Integral Learning) the Local Futures Ladakh team organised two separate learning tours in Ladakh during the summer of 2023 as part of the “VCIL Travel School”. These travel schools teach young people from Vietnam about the serious environmental and social challenges facing Ladakh today, expose them to village living and hands-on work, and introduce them to various organisations and actors working towards sustainable alternatives in Ladakhi society. The trips have had a profound impact on the participants, many of whom have changed the course of their own lives towards greater environmental and social engagement upon return home.
Under our "Help in the Village" initiative, the Local Futures Ladakh team embarked on visits to Likir, Tar and Gya villages to engage with local families and participate in the harvest and other agricultural and village work, in order to both offer practical help and gain profound insights into their agricultural and craft traditions. The mission of this initiative is to reinforce the vital importance of keeping small-scale, traditional agriculture and villages alive, as well as the invaluable cultural heritage preserved within these communities.
The group “Relocalise Northern Rivers” was born as a result of this event, and continues to meet weekly on localisation efforts. They have since partnered with Mullum SEED which supports administration, governance and fundraising assistance, and launched a website to highlight and spread their message of localisation.

In May, we joined forces with Adam Russell of Local Pegs to host a transformative “Localization Weekend” at The Farm in Byron Bay. The event commenced with a screening of Local Futures film Planet Local on Friday evening, followed by an engaging panel discussion focused on advancing the local food economy in the area.

On Saturday evening, local economy expert and US lawyer Michael Shuman delivered an enlightening presentation on the advantages of investing in local economies and initiating impactful local investment projects. The following day, Michael conducted a full day workshop, delving deeply into the effects of globalisation on local economies, the substantial benefits of local investment, and actionable strategies for communities to foster economic relocalisation. Tailored specifically to the Byron region, participants explored collective initiatives to bolster and sustain a thriving future, addressing critical areas such as food security, affordable housing, localised energy solutions, healthcare diversity, educational opportunities, and enhancing local resilience in the long term.

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“LOCAL IS OUR FUTURE” AUDIOBOOK

This year, we released an audiobook version of Helena Norberg-Hodge’s most recent book, Local is Our Future: Steps to an Economics of Happiness. In this book, Helena connects the dots between our social, economic, ecological and spiritual crises, revealing how a systemic shift from global to local can address these seemingly disparate problems simultaneously.

Distilling the wisdom gleaned from four decades of activism and direct experience in both the global North and South, Helena deconstructs the old narrative of “progress” through technological advance and corporate growth, while presenting a concise and compelling case for economic localisation. Her arguments are supported by real-world examples proving that – beneath the radar of the mainstream media and far from the fetishised techno-utopia of Silicon Valley – healthy and vibrant futures, built upon connection to nature and community, are already in the making.
GLOBAL TO LOCAL PROGRAMME

Throughout the year we brought people together from around the world to spread the localisation message far and wide. Our team spoke at conferences, educational institutions, festivals, film events, and award ceremonies all around the world.

While our freely distributed films, podcasts, blogs, and publications continue to ripple out across the world, Helena also filmed a 5-module online course on localisation in collaboration with Earthed, and the “Great Minds” course called “An indictment against the dark side of economic globalisation” was launched.

We produced an updated edition of our Local Food Can Save the World short video, and a podcast episode with Alnoor Ladha on Courageous Optimism. As mentioned before, our Ladakh team produced a video about Chuchot House Restoration.

Over the past year, Helena gave 35 live public talks in Australia, Spain, UK, Italy, Germany and Czech Republic, as well as several online sessions, including, among others:

• Keynote: “The Power of localization” at the National Sustainable Living Festival, Melbourne;

• “Why localization is the path to human wellbeing”, Resurgence Talk Series;

• “Local is our Future: Steps to an Economics of Happiness” at the Happiness & Its Causes conference, Sydney;

• “Small is Beautiful Reimagined” panel discussion at Schumacher College, UK, with Satish Kumar and Dr. Stephan Harding;

• Public event “Local is Our Future: Connecting People and Places” at Atelier Gardens in Berlin;

• Two sessions at Meltingpot Forum in Ostrava, Czech Republic: “Rethinking Globalization”, an interview moderated by John Perkins and “Local is Our Future”, a discussion with Tomáš Hajzler;

• Voices of Meltingpot Interview (released in January 2024);

• An online session “How Local Action Can Lead to Systemic Change: Localisation as a Solution-Multiplier” for Future-Ready Society Conference 2023: The Future is Local?, IPS Singapore;

• A talk at Medicine Festival, UK: “Going Local: A Structural Path Of Reconnection To Others & To Mother Gaia”.
Local Futures staff demonstrated leadership in the following capacities:

- Taught local economics as part of a 12-week university diploma course for Latin America, run by Plataforma de Introducción a Nuevas Economías (PINE) and the Faculty of Economic Sciences, University of Cordoba, Argentina (Facultad de Ciencias Economicas, Universidad de Cordoba);
- Participation in the first in-person Assembly of the Global Tapestry of Alternatives, Nanyuki, Kenya, Aug 4-10;
- Presentation, “Degrowth, deglobalization and localization”, at the 9th International Degrowth Conference, Zagreb, Croatia, 29 Aug-2 Sept;
- Representation of Local Futures at World Social Forum in Nepal;
- Volunteerism and visits with organic farmers, local food, zero waste entrepreneurs, and eco-tourism/biodiversity conservation centres;
- Presentation at film screening at Jagera ecovillage in Maclean, NSW, in May;
- World Localization Day talk at The Farm, Byron Bay, NSW in June;
- Ongoing hosting of Local Futures film screenings and discussions at various events worldwide.

Numerous literary pieces were written by Local Futures staff in 2023, including:

- “Bristol 2023 - A global movement for change comes of Age”, by Helena Norberg-Hodge. Resurgence magazine, May 2023;
- The essay “Local Futures: The Power of Decentralization” by Helena Norberg-Hodge, which was featured in a new collection called Experiments in Movement Unity from the Great Transition Initiative;
- “Integrating Ladakh’s Traditional Wisdom into Local Policies For Holistic Development” by Ladakh Project Associate, Kunzang Deachen, Kashmir Times, December 2023;
- Seven blogs, including “A revival of natural building in Ladakh” by Alex Jensen and Kunzang Deachen, “Local Food for Rapid Transition” by Henry Coleman, and “Putting technology in its place” by Helena Norberg-Hodge.
INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE FOR LOCALIZATION (IAL)

As part of our work to further build a localisation movement, we have continued our IAL monthly newsletter to share news and views from around the world of relevance to localisation. Membership in the IAL currently numbers 1800, representing nearly 60 countries. Our video “Introduction to the IAL” has recently been translated to French, German, Spanish and Japanese, totalling 13 languages thanks to volunteer translators.

Social Media

To enhance our global networking efforts, we recognised the importance of bolstering Local Futures social media presence this year to complement and amplify our events and initiatives. Our following currently stands at:

- Instagram followers: 23,100
- Facebook followers: 135,000
- ‘X’ Local Futures followers: 8,725
- ‘X’ Helena Norberg-Hodge followers: 3,013
- Tik Tok followers: 2990; Likes: 17,600
**Total Revenue $566,834**

- Donations* 453,318
- Royalties and writing fees 4,232
- Lecture and speaking fees 7,619
- Sale of publications and videos 8,913
- Screening, streaming and broadcast fees 2,591
- Event tickets 75,152
- Administrative support fees 373
- Interest and investment income 14,634

* Includes $8,620 earmarked for organisations for which ISEC is the fiscal sponsor, and $4,144 for Ladakh programs.

**Total Expenses $557,292**

- Management and administrative 60,189
- Fundraising 9,628

Program Expenses:
- World Localization Day 45,492
- Planet Local Summit 238,381
- Global to Local programs 137,833
- Film projects 21,618
- International Alliance for Localization 7107
- Ladakh programs 28,274
- Australia localisation projects 8,770