



# Local Futures

The Newsletter of the International Society for Ecology and Culture



## Director's note:

### On the Cutting Edge of Hope

Helena Norberg-Hodge

Despite the tremendous amount of political, economic and ecological upheaval over the past year, we remain hopeful. That is because we are also seeing the growth of a powerful counter movement – towards both resistance and renewal – around the world. In more than 40 years of working to promote a global-to-local vision, I'm finding that people are more interested and engaged than ever before in solutions that go beyond treating symptoms – solutions that are broad and deep and get to the root causes of our many crises.

At Local Futures, we are fortunate to be on the cutting edge of hope. Every day,

In this issue:

- Economics of Happiness events across the world
- Helena wins award for community advocacy
- Education for Action webinars and workshops

we collaborate with many of the inspiring people, organizations, and initiatives that are forging a path towards a better world. Many of these collaborations are described in the following pages – our Economics of Happiness conferences, our ongoing projects in Ladakh, our grassroots International Alliance for Localization (IAL), and our multiple outreach projects, including webinars, podcasts, animated films, interviews, and lectures.

We also continue to engage with political movements that go beyond left and right and work at a structural level to promote



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decentralization, or localization. In Japan, we have helped forge a broad-based Economics of Happiness/localization movement. In South Korea, we collaborate with a group of 37 mayors who have formed a Social Economy Forum. In Italy, we consult with the Five Star movement (M5S), an environmentally-minded people's party that is channelling half of their MPs' (member of parliament) salaries into a microcredit bank that provides funding for small businesses. They have raised more than €10 million so far. In the UK, the small Somerset town of Frome, where our film *The Economics of Happiness* was screened in 2011, has revolutionized rural politics. Over the last few years, representatives of Independents for Frome have gradually won all the seats on the local council. Their platform is about sustainability, inclusivity and rebuilding the local economy from the ground up.

In this age of deep political divides, policy gridlock, and the erosion of democracy, examples like these are especially heartening. They underline a position that Local Futures has long held: that change needs to happen at both the policy and grassroots levels. I hope you will enjoy reading about the ways we have contributed to this positive change around the world. I also hope you will visit our website and social media pages where we showcase many of the grassroots projects that are happening, globally, in food and farming, finance, community building, health, and much more. Together, they show that a new economy is possible, both in theory and in action.

Over the next year, our "education for action" programs will continue to help build and shape the global movement for genuine democracy, ecological health and strong local economies. But, nothing is possible without the help of our supporters. I hope you will be encouraged by the progress we help to catalyze, and will support our work.



## Community Solutions salutes Helena Norberg-Hodge

We are deeply honored that this year's Arthur Morgan Award was given to Local Futures' Director Helena Norberg-Hodge, "in recognition of her tireless advocacy for communities across the planet". The award is bestowed annually by The Arthur Morgan Institute for Community Solutions to honor those who are passionate about – and committed to – community and democracy. Community Solutions is perhaps best known for their inspiring 2006 film *The Power of Community: How Cuba Survived Peak Oil*, which described how organic farming, urban agriculture – and of course community – enabled Cuba to survive the collapse of the Soviet Union and the subsequent loss of almost all its oil and food imports.

Community Solutions is among the many organizations worldwide that are helping forge a grassroots path to a new economy, and we are thrilled that they chose to honor our work. We are also very happy to have collaborated with them on our Economics of Happiness conference in Ohio, and we look forward to working with them on other projects in the future.





# ECONOMICS of HAPPINESS CONFERENCE

## Economics of Happiness Conferences

**T**his autumn, Local Futures helped organize and participated in six major Economics of Happiness conferences. Four were held in the United States — in Santa Fe, New Mexico; Yellow Springs, Ohio; South Royalton, Vermont; and Port Townsend, Washington. We also held the third in our series of annual conferences in Jeonju, South Korea, and a huge Economics of Happiness World Forum in Tokyo, Japan. In a remarkable demonstration of stamina, Helena Norberg-Hodge actively participated in all but the South Korean event. We are also grateful to our friends and colleagues Judy Wicks, George Ferguson, and Charles Eisenstein, who took time from their busy schedules to join us at two events this year.

"Thrilled by the tidal events  
you're generating!"  
~ Joanna Macy

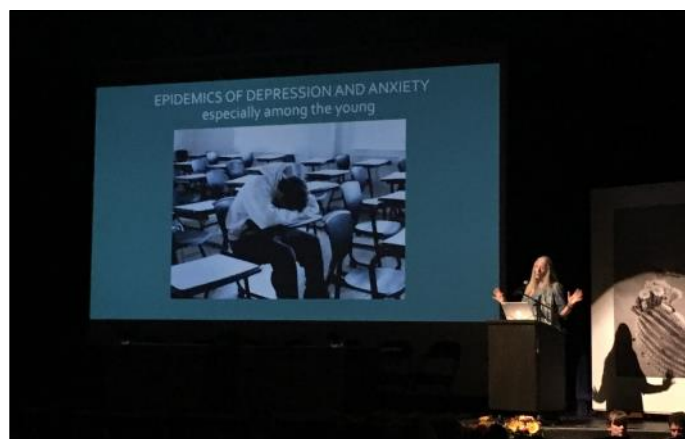
All the conferences were well-attended — some of them filled to capacity. Organizing and hosting this many events in such a compressed time frame would have been impossible without

help from the growing number of organizations that have been inspired by our big picture perspective.

Here are some highlights from each of the events:

### *New Mexico*

Santa Fe is a city with a strong sense of local character and personality — fertile ground for the localization movement. Approximately 300 people attended over the course of the 3-day program, which brought new-economy luminaries such as Judy Wicks, Native American activist Winona LaDuke, former Bristol, UK, mayor George Ferguson, and author Charles Eisenstein together with local leaders in agriculture, academia, indigenous rights, business, banking, and public policy.



Helena Norberg-Hodge speaking in Santa Fe

Our local partner in organizing the conference was an emerging NGO called Reconnect Today, which aspires to engage writers, educators, artists, activists, and healers with the worldwide localization movement through classes, workshops, and conferences.

By interweaving plenaries and panel discussions with art, music, and dance performances, the conference allowed attendees to easily connect with our message that community-building goes hand in hand with celebration. Many attendees reported feeling inspired — and

"I am grateful to have been a part of an event that combined such depth and substance and stimulation. Absolutely awesome."

~ Panel member, Santa Fe conference

sometimes surprised — at how much was already being done across northern New Mexico to support local resilience. Several attendees called it a “life-changing” experience, and left more determined than ever to catalyze the nascent localization movement in their communities.



Performance by the Kallestewa Dancers of Zuni Pueblo in Sante Fe

## Ohio

This conference, co-organized and hosted by Community Solutions, featured our long-term allies in the localization movement, Charles Eisenstein and Michael Shuman. Other speakers included Anthony Flaccavento, author of *Building a Healthy Economy from the Bottom Up*, and Jim Merkel, author of *Radical Simplicity: Small Footprints on a Finite Earth*. Among the participants was a woman who has organized more than 50 screenings of *The Economics of Happiness* in Ohio, and a professor who told Helena that he has seen the film about 25 times, but learns something new with each viewing.

During the conference Helena was honored with the Arthur Morgan Award for her localization work (see page 2). It was especially gratifying to see the influence of Local Futures’ vision in the work of Community Solutions. Besides their outreach around energy democracy and community economies, they recently started the Agraria project, a 28-acre demonstration site for regenerative agriculture in Yellow Springs.



Tree identification workshop at conference in Ohio

## Washington

Another Economics of Happiness conference in the US was held in Port Townsend, Washington, on the grounds of Fort Worden on Puget Sound. The fort — once emblematic of US militarism — is now a thriving community hub and retreat center, hosting music, arts, and activities that connect people with others and nature.

The crowd that filled the beautiful venue was treated to a heady mix of plenary talks, panels, music, film screenings, nature walks, and a local food tour, as well as workshops ranging from biomimicry and the power of song to permaculture, from affordable housing and the dangers of artificial intelligence to an introduction to the theatre of the oppressed.

Plenary speakers and panelists included Richard Heinberg, Senior Fellow of the Post Carbon Institute; David Korten and Sarah Van Gelder, co-founders of *Yes!* magazine; Judy Wicks, co-founder of BALLE; John De Graaf, co-founder of the Happiness Alliance; Michael Ableman, organic farmer and author; and Vicki Robin, author of *Your Money or Your Life*.

The conference was co-organized by Karen Wyeth, an active supporter of Local Futures. She had participated in our conference in Portland, Oregon in 2015 and felt inspired to bring the same experience to her own community. It was her first time working on an event of such a size, but she

reports that it was “incredibly inspiring and has got my community all fired up.” There are now plans to form a local Economics of Happiness group to meet regularly and keep the momentum going.

## Vermont

The state of Vermont is a prime location for an Economics of Happiness conference: not only is Vermont the home of Local Futures’ US office, but it has topped the Locavore Index — a measure of commitment to local food — six years in a row. Vermonters are also deeply involved in other aspects of the global-to-local shift, from decentralized renewable energy and ‘buy-local’ campaigns to place-based education, healthcare, and housing.

While all of these efforts add up to a thriving localization movement, most Vermonters aren’t aware of the big picture connection among all of these separate efforts. Making those connections more visible was a main goal of the conference.

Titled “Localize It: What Resilience Looks Like”, the event included plenary talks by Helena Norberg-Hodge as well as a number of thinkers and activists from the New England region and beyond: Frances Moore Lappé, founder of the Small Planet Institute and author of *Diet for a Small Planet*; Chuck Collins, senior policy analyst for the Institute for Policy Studies, and author of *99 to 1: How Wealth Inequality is Wrecking the World*; Sherri Mitchell, Native American lawyer, activist, and Director of the Land Peace Foundation; Jonathan Rosenthal, Director of the New Economy Coalition; and Christine Hanna, Executive Director of *Yes!* magazine.

Given the abundance of localization initiatives in Vermont, it’s not surprising that the call for workshop presenters led to nearly 50 offerings — on local energy, community radio, tiny houses, regenerative agriculture, worker-owned coops, race, class and gender, and much more.

Our local partners in the conference included BALE (Building a Local Economy), Vermonters for a New Economy, the New Economy Law Center,

and the New England Resilience and Transition Network. We expect that the connections made with these organizations will lead to additional collaborations in the future.

## South Korea

For the third year in a row, an Economics of Happiness Conference was held in Jeonju, South Korea. Like the others in our series of international conferences, the Jeonju event aimed at helping catalyze a global movement for localization.

Our first conference here resulted in the “Jeonju Declaration on the Economics of Happiness” — which committed the local government to localization as an integral strategy for positive change. This year’s conference, co-organized by Jeonju’s City Council and Local Futures, focused on governance for localization.

Simon Richardson, Mayor of Byron Bay, Australia, delivered the keynote speech. Gwendolyn Hallsmith, an expert on local banking alternatives, spoke on localizing the financial system. Local Futures Associate Program Director Anja Lyngbaek spoke about local food strategies, and Professor Sakata Yusuke talked about localization initiatives in Japan.

Since our first Jeonju conference, many concrete steps towards localization have taken place here, including the creation of a ten-year local food plan that ensures the right to healthy food, and establishes an independent foundation to help 3,000 small local family farms.



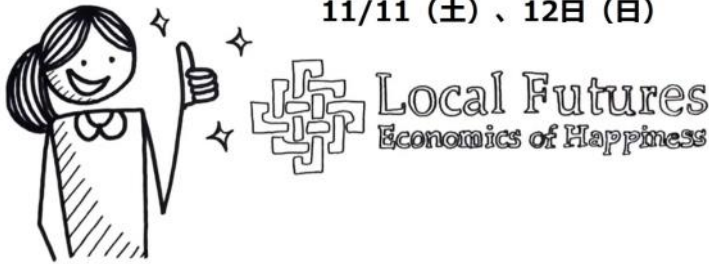
Anja Lyngbaek at press conference in Jeonju

The impact of Jeonju's ongoing commitment to localization was demonstrated through a number of site visits: to a cooperative shop with products from 300 local producers, an affordable local food restaurant, and a food innovation center that makes food processing and packaging equipment available to small farmers free of charge.

We look forward to seeing what further steps Jeonju takes in the years to come.

## 「幸せの経済」国際会議 in 東京 2017

11/11 (土)、12日 (日)



### Japan

Our Economics of Happiness World Forum in Tokyo was organized in collaboration with a large group of partners, including the Goi Peace Foundation, Slow Food Japan, Global Ecovillage Network Japan, Transition Town Japan, the Muji company (committed to products that are simple, non-consumerist, and zero-waste), the Pal system (a progressive food co-op serving 1 million households), Johnan Shinkin Bank (one of the biggest co-op banks in the Tokyo area), and Kamakura Investment Management (which invests in small domestic firms that focus on the environment.)

Though we had high hopes for this event, it still far exceeded our expectations. Over 800 people — many of them in their 30s or younger — came from across Japan and beyond, representing dozens of environmental, spiritual and social activist organizations. There were workshops on renewable energy, local food, local finance, ecological education, nature-based design, and much more.

The plenary presenters came from an impressive mix of countries, including Mexico, China, Thailand, India (including Ladakh), Bhutan,

UK, and more. We were also glad to see a six-person delegation sent by the government of Jeonju, South Korea. Overall it was a wonderful celebration — with music, art, and a moving tribute to Fukushima.



Participants in Tokyo

We have been working to build up the localization movement in Japan for several years now. In 2010, Keibo Oiwa published a book based on an interview with Helena called *Going Local is the Answer*, and this year a new book, *Local Futures: Building an Economics of Happiness*, was launched during the conference.



Keibo Oiwa speaking in Japan

## Feedback from conference participants: Economics of Happiness provides *hope*

**W**e received wonderfully positive feedback on our Economics of Happiness conferences. Perhaps the most common refrain is that these events provide hope – not only because of the broad, unified paradigm that brings diverse groups together for systemic change, but because people learn about how much is already happening around the world. Below are a few of the many positive comments we received this year in the US:

- ◇ In the face of the horrid things that are happening around us, I am heartened by the amazing things people are doing... Thank God for this group of folks walking the walk!
- ◇ This conference was truly inspiring – I nearly teared up walking back to my car at the end of it. Overall, I thought it was a wonderful antidote to ‘Trumpism’ and a much-needed gathering in these dangerous and dark times.
- ◇ It shook up my thinking, and increased my sensitivity to the negative role of large corporations in our society.
- ◇ It gave me some hope. We are at a fork in the path and we can make it if enough choose the correct way.
- ◇ We are definitely in systems collapse BUT we are a powerful movement working together to create the new systems needed.
- ◇ I’m so excited there’s a well-developed movement that supports ideas I’ve been independently exploring, and that there’s an opportunity for me to contribute.
- ◇ I was very impressed with the breadth of the topics, the depth of thought and the experience of the presenters.
- ◇ I really appreciated the sense that there is a unified paradigm of where we need to go – a broad direction with room to welcome many different particulars.
- ◇ I was impressed by the breadth of the expertise, from the spiritual to the practical, all working to change the system for the better.
- ◇ I think the main positive effect is that I know I am not alone in this grief, this resolve and this hope. I am energized to keep on keeping on.
- ◇ This has been hugely impactful for me, leading me to more research, writing, ways of thinking, considering my lifestyle with intention, and fueling my ongoing projects.
- ◇ It has made me think about shaping my work so that I will have more time to get involved in localization related activities. It re-affirmed the urgency with which we have to work together on this.
- ◇ I am especially grateful for the strong presence of race, class, and decolonization perspectives. I could see the effort made by organizers to lift up the marginalized voices that did come out, and place their perspectives at the center so that they could influence the whole conversation.
- ◇ The greatest impact on me is learning the extent to which there are real and broad networks of people engaged in these ideas. It has given me organizing inspiration. Truly a great event!

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## The Ladakh Project

Anja Lyngbaek, Associate Programs Director

Continuing our more than four decades of work in Ladakh, or 'Little Tibet', we undertook a number of exciting new and ongoing collaborative efforts this year.

### *Food and farming*

Local Futures has been supporting a project aimed at converting farms in the higher part of Phyang village to organic methods. Organized by the Women's Alliance (one of several Ladakhi NGOs we started), the project acquires surplus manure from nomadic livestock-based communities, and brings it to farming families to use as a substitute for chemical fertilizers. The manure is intended as stop-gap, while the farms regain their ability to produce sufficient compost and animal manures on their own. The first year was a success, with participating farmers reporting strong plants and good yields — and a keen desire to continue.

As in previous years, our Help With Harvest initiative enabled tourists to assist Ladakhi farm families during the harvest. Visitors from many countries came to help with the barley harvest — cutting, stacking and carrying the crop. At the same time, the visitors demonstrated to the Ladakhis that there is a keen interest in farming among the most "modern" people in the world.



Gangles village near Leh

### *Mindful Futures workshop*

One of our most inspiring activities this summer was a four-day Mindful Futures Workshop for

Ladakhi youth, held in collaboration with two local organizations: Juley Ladakh and the youth-led Flowering Dharma. The workshop was held at Raku House, a traditional dwelling in Leh with adjoining woodland and open greens, beautifully restored by Flowering Dharma. Participants included 18 young Ladakhis — Buddhists, Muslims, and two young Nepalese immigrants.

In addition to Local Futures staff, presenters and panelists included Geshe Konchok Wangdu, head of the Central Institute for Buddhist Studies; Stanzin Gya, director of the award-winning film *Shepherdess of the Glacier*; Tashi Morup from Ladakh Arts and Media Organisation; Dolma Tsering from the Ladakh Buddhist Association; and historian and writer Abdul Ghani Sheik.

The response from workshop participants was very encouraging, and we plan to organize similar workshops with Ladakhi youth in the future.

### *Mindful Travel*

The number of tourists in Ladakh continues to rise, and so do the associated negative impacts: mountains of garbage (an entire valley is full of disposable plastic bottles); excessive water use from tourist demands for flush toilets and showers; degradation of natural areas; and the erosion of Ladakhi culture and values. In response, we continue to reach out to visitors with information and activities that can help them to engage in culturally and ecologically sensitive behavior, and to reflect on the role of tourism and development in undermining Ladakh's traditions and environment.

Key tools in this effort are the Mindful Travel materials that we distribute to tourists. This year we also made a concerted effort to share our short Mindful Travel film with other groups and to run regular screenings of the film at the Women's Alliance Centre. The message of the film was very well received, and we are now approaching Ladakh travel-oriented websites with an invitation to include a link to the film.

We have also reached out to a number of Ladakhi NGOs with a proposal for a joint Mindful Travel campaign. A collaboration among these groups would not only have far greater impact, it could potentially secure the support of the Ladakh Hill Council – leading to concrete policy changes.

### ***Tourist Education***

For westerners in particular, a visit to Ladakh can spark a rethinking of conventional notions of wealth, progress, and development. This is why we organize daily screenings of our films *Ancient Futures* and *The Economics of Happiness* at the Women's Alliance Centre. The films provide a larger context for tourists' experiences in Ladakh – and make those experiences relevant to events and trends in their own countries and communities. Over the 2017 tourist season, an estimated 2,000 people attended the screenings and participated in lively post-film discussions, led by Local Futures' facilitators.



### ***Learning from Ladakh***

This year, we ran a Learning from Ladakh program for Operation Groundswell – a Canadian organization that seeks “to spark a movement of socially conscious and globally active backpacktivists”.

Youth from the US, Canada and Mexico took part in the program, which involved a five-day intensive workshop, fieldtrips and encounters

with Ladakhi NGOs and innovators. Among the highlights were a heritage walk to learn about Ladakh's history and multicultural roots; a field trip to the Leh dump to see the growing waste-mountains resulting from tourism and consumerism; a hike to a melting glacier to witness the impacts of climate change; and encounters with youth groups, including Flowering Dharma.

Our 2017 Ladakh team included: Richard Hendin, Henry Coleman, Sean Keller, Alex Jensen and Anja Lyngbaek. We would like to give special thanks to the many volunteers that dedicated their time and skills to the Ladakh Project this year.

## **DIY Economics of Happiness Workshops**

Hundreds of people from more than forty countries have requested our Economics of Happiness Workshop toolkit since it was made available a year ago. The toolkit was developed to make it easier for people to organize workshops in their own “backyard” to stimulate broad discussion about the global economy and its alternatives. To facilitate this process further, we offered live-streamed online tutorials with detailed instructions, tips, Q&A and fruitful exchange between participants.

The DIY workshop program is being used in many different ways: in Colorado, it was part of a conference focused on the empowerment of young women; in South Africa it was integrated into a Wellbeing Economy Festival; and in Brisbane, Australia, it was used at a new economy conference. It has also been embraced in academia: workshops were held at universities, including St. Petersburg State University in Russia; the toolkit was used in a PhD dissertation in Croatia, in a teaching program aimed at 14-18 year-olds in Piacenza, Italy, and by a Professor of Conflict Studies in the United States.



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## Events, courses and collaborations

Kristen Steele, Associate Programs Director

### *Catalyzing change in Mullumbimby, New South Wales, Australia*

The town of Mullumbimby hosted several Local Futures events this year. The first was an evening discussion — “Hope in a Time of Crisis” — for a full house at the Civic Hall. A lively exchange took place among Helena Norberg-Hodge, Damon Gameau (creator of *That Sugar Film*), and Phillip Frazer (founder of *Rolling Stone Australia*) on moving beyond left-right politics and single-issue campaigning towards activism for systemic change. The discussion was moderated by Australian journalist and comedian Mandy Nolan, resulting in a provocative and entertaining discussion, with lively input from the floor.

Later, we hosted a two-day Big Picture Activism Workshop, led by Local Futures’ staff Anja Lyngbaek, Henry Coleman and Helena Norberg-Hodge. Around 30 students, activists and community organizers participated in this highly productive and fun workshop, which focused on effective strategies for change.

The Local Futures team also contributed to the regional Renew Fest — a collaborative effort by a number of local NGOs and community businesses — with a series of talks on local economy, local food strategies and the need for community-based decentralized renewable energy.

### *The Rules : webinar and film screening*

In recent years, we have enjoyed collaborating with the NGO The Rules, “a global collective of activists, writers, artists, researchers, coders and others who work to expose the root causes of our current crisis.” In addition to numerous brainstorming sessions by Helena Norberg-Hodge and The Rules’ Director Alnoor Ladha, we organized a webinar in which the two discussed “Spiritual Activism” (see page 13). We also co-organized an event in London that featured a screening of *The Economics of Happiness* followed by

a discussion with Helena and The Rules member Jason Hickel – an anthropologist at the London School of Economics, and author of *The Divide: A Brief Guide to Global Inequality and its Solutions*. Several of Jason’s essays have also been posted on the Local Futures blog.

### *Schumacher College course:*

#### *Earth, Culture, Economy – The Power of Local*

In July, carrying on from more than three decades of collaboration, Helena, Satish Kumar and Stephan Harding co-led a course at Schumacher College in England. The course provided an in-depth exploration of the steps involved in moving toward integrated, human-scale economic structures. It covered a range of topics from the perspective of both North and South, including

- Measuring real progress
- Reducing energy use while creating meaningful jobs
- Localization as a climate change strategy
- Balancing urban and rural
- The spiritual and psychological benefits of connecting to nature and community
- Healthcare in a life-based economy
- The roots of racial, ethnic and religious conflict
- Restoring democracy

The course attracted a diverse group of participants, including several who had worked in the corporate sector. Since our approach is to avoid demonizing individuals and to focus instead on

“[The course] was so powerful, so insightful, that I believe I’m still downloading and absorbing all that it meant to me... I feel now even more inspired not only to see the world from a big picture perspective but also to act towards a more inclusive (and local!) world.”

~ Schumacher course participant

the destructive corporate system, participants found it liberating to move away from dichotomies of “good guys” and “bad guys”.

### ***European Ecovillage Network Conference: Solidarity, Resilience & Hope***

As one of its founding members, we have been working with the Global Ecovillage Network (GEN) for many years. In July, the European branch of GEN hosted a summer conference that drew 600 people. Keynote speakers were Helena Norberg-Hodge and Charles Eisenstein. Helena also showed *The Economics of Happiness* film and led a workshop on Big Picture Activism.



Biogas digester at Ecovillage Network conference

### ***Global Forum on New Economy and Social Innovation (NESI)***

In April, Associate Programs Director Kristen Steele represented Local Futures and the International Alliance for Localization (IAL) at NESI. Held in Malaga, Spain, the gathering was the culmination of over a year of networking and preparation. Local Futures was one of more than 20 organizations engaged by the Global Hub for the Common Good to plan the forum.



Kristen Steele speaking at NESI

Our 2016 event in London, “The Economics of Happiness: Towards a More Equitable World”, featured a collaborative session on the visions to include in NESI. We also contributed to the drafting of “The NESI Charter”, which outlines goals, values and strategies to guide the co-creation of a new economy. The event itself was an unprecedented opportunity for groups working on new economy issues around Europe to connect with each other. Several future collaborations have emerged, and a Local Futures podcast series featuring speakers from the event will be released in the coming year.



Co-creation at NESI

## Animation

We released our first-ever animated film this year. Entitled *Going Local: the Solution Multiplier*, the animation provides an overview of localization in 2½ minutes. It had an immediate enthusiastic response, with more than 60,000 views online and more than a thousand ‘shares’, including by organizations such as Post Carbon Institute, New Economy Coalition and Transition groups.

“Absolutely wonderful!  
What a gift.”  
~ Vicki Robin



## Webinars

Sean Keller, Media and Outreach Coordinator

Local Futures rounded out our Global to Local Webinar Series with four live webinars in 2017, all of them hosted by Helena Norberg-Hodge.

In January, she was joined by Christian Felber, founder of Economy for the Common Good, to discuss how to move the world towards genuine participatory democracy. In February, Helena and climate activist Bill McKibben answered participants’ questions about climate change. And in April, Helena and Alnoor Ladha from activist NGO The Rules talked about the importance of spiritual reconnection for effective political activism, in the context of the Standing

“With its sacred fire, daily prayers and water ceremonies, Standing Rock has helped to reanimate the sacred aspect of activism. We are seeing a shift from resistance to resistance and renewal simultaneously.”

~ Alnoor Ladha

Rock resistance movement in the United States. The final webinar of the year was with Shaun Chamberlin, author of *The Transition Timeline* and managing director of the Fleming Policy Centre. It focused on the late David Fleming’s work, his book *Surviving the Future*, and his contribution to the localization movement. Each webinar, in its own way, also touched on the root causes of rising authoritarianism around the globe – and on effective responses.

## Translations

Steve Gorelick, Managing/Programs Director

There is enormous demand for our materials around the world, and many of them have been translated into a wide range of languages. We rely heavily on volunteers for this work – people who want to share our message in their own local language. This year, our *Going Local* animation was translated into 25 languages – ranging from Bengali, Punjabi, Gujarati and Hindi, to Persian, Tagalog, Arabic, Hebrew and Basque. French volunteer Bertrand Racquet was heavily involved in subtitling the film with these translations, and we thank him wholeheartedly for his efforts.

After two years of work, another volunteer, Argentinian Gabriela Muñoz, has finalized her translation of the *Ancient Futures* book into Spanish, and we are in the process of finding a suitable publisher. In addition, we have made arrangements with publisher Terra Nuova to publish an Italian translation of our booklet, *Localization: Essential Steps to an Economics of Happiness*. Publishers in Japan and South Korea are planning translated editions in those countries as well.

Two additional translations of *The Economics of Happiness* were completed this past year: Arabic and Simplified Chinese. Our previous Chinese version was subtitled in Traditional Chinese, and the new version will be accessible to far more people on the Chinese mainland.

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## Planet Local 2017

Isabel Marlens, Researcher/Social Media

Planet Local is our web series showcasing many of the grassroots localization projects springing up all around the world. Currently in its fourth year, Planet Local has grown to include several new categories — Eco Communities, Local Policies, and Sharing Economies. Planet Local has also expanded to Medium.com, where readers can choose to “follow” our account, and where we can feature many more photographs in order to bring the projects to life.

Recent examples of Planet Local initiatives range from La Casa De Los Ningunos (The Nobodies’ House), an experimental community in La Paz, Bolivia, to Can Decreix, a “degrowth center” in the south of France; from Thimble Island Ocean Farm, an underwater sustainable “farm” off the coast of New York state, to the Torba Province of Vanuatu, where the local government has placed a ban on imported junk foods; from Bhoomi College, a radically alternative university on the outskirts of Bangalore, India, to Ebanka, a democratic, cooperatively-owned bank in Croatia.



Thimble Island Ocean Farm

In the year ahead, Planet Local will expand further to include longer stories about projects like these, which will appear on the Local Futures blog. In addition, we have plans to begin producing short videos about selected Planet Local initiatives. We hope these will make the diverse localization movement even more vivid and accessible — inspiring people who wish to embark on new projects and connecting those around the world who are already hard at work in their local communities.

## Blogs and articles

Steve Gorelick, Managing/Programs Director

In the often dark times since the US elections of 2016, people have been hungry for a perspective that leads to a sense of hope — one that does not blame our many crises on inescapable human nature, but on an inhuman system that can and must be changed. In the past year we spread this message through a variety of print and online platforms.

Helena was interviewed in *The Guardian* for a series called Development 2030, and by the online series Project Recourse, which profiles the inspiring initiatives of individuals worldwide. Helena’s article in the Australian magazine *Womankind*, “The Phantom Economy of Multinationals and Banks”, was described by one reader as “one of [Womankind’s] finest”. Helena was also a contributor to *Climate 2020*, a major climate change report produced by the United Nations Association-UK. And her article, “Localization and the Economics of Happiness”, was part of the Buddhist peace organization Soka Gakkai International’s series on creative responses to a changing world.

In addition, numerous essays from both Local Futures staff and our extensive network of contacts appeared on the Local Futures blog. Here are some excerpts:

### *Why are my Highly Educated Friends so Ignorant About Trade?*

by Isabel Marlens

“My friends didn’t vote for Donald Trump. Most are from ‘liberal’ parts of the US. They went to good schools for 12 years, worked hard, got good grades. Many went on to top colleges and universities, places like Stanford, Yale, NYU, UCLA. And yet most of them know almost nothing about one of the most important issues facing the world today.”

## *Globalization's Blowback*

by Alex Jensen

"Until now, it seems, corporations' pollution offshoring was easy enough for Northern policymakers to comfortably ignore — it was offshored, after all — so that the smoggy horrors of industrializing China or India were, for places like North America, still at a 'safe' distance. No more. Now, in addition to the products that magically appear on Western store shelves absolutely shorn of history and provenance, much of the hitherto distant pollution emitted in their production has also arrived."



## *The Sharing Economy: It Takes More than a Smartphone*

by Steven Gorelick

"Shoppers today can buy robotic vacuum cleaners, forks that monitor their eating habits, and 2-story inflatable cats; they can choose from 504 brands of designer jeans and 2 million smartphone apps. These are symptoms of a consumer culture gone mad."

## *Averting the Apocalypse: Lessons from Costa Rica*

by Jason Hickel

"If we want to have any hope of averting catastrophe, we're going to have to do something

about our addiction to growth. This is tricky, because GDP growth is the main policy objective of virtually every government on the planet. It lies at the heart of everything we've been told to believe about how the economy should work: that GDP growth is good, that it's essential to progress, and that if we want to improve human wellbeing and eradicate poverty around the world, we need more of it. It's a powerful narrative. But is it true?"

## *Trump Trauma*

by Helena Norberg-Hodge

"When the scale and pace of economic activity are reduced, anonymity gives way to face-to-face relationships, and to a closer connection to Nature. Bonds of local interdependence are strengthened, and a secure sense of personal and cultural identity begins to flourish. All of these efforts are based on the principle of connection and the celebration of diversity, presenting a genuine systemic solution to our global crises as opposed to the fear-mongering and divisiveness of the dominant discourse in the media."

## *Life in a 'Degrowth' Economy, and Why You Might Actually Enjoy It*

by Samuel Alexander

"What does genuine economic progress look like? The orthodox answer is that a bigger economy is always better, but this idea is increasingly strained by the knowledge that, on a finite planet, the



Traditional grinding of corn in Boruca, Costa Rica

economy can't grow forever. But what is a steady-state economy? Why is it desirable or necessary? And what would it be like to live in?"

### ***The Problem with Techno-Optimism***

by Nicholas Agar

"A tendency to overvalue technological progress tends to make us reckless in its pursuit. In this era of climate change and nuclear arsenals capable of destroying the world many times over, we are acutely aware of some of the perils of technological progress. When we overestimate the propensity of progress to boost well-being, we are more likely to judge the risks of progress to be worth taking."



### ***Our Obsolescent Economy***

by Steven Gorelick

"It's time to envision – and take steps to create – an economy that doesn't depend on making children psychologically insecure in order to turn them into lifelong consumers – all to fatten the bottom line of already bloated corporations. As Helena Norberg-Hodge asks in *The Economics of Happiness*, 'do we really need the stuff that the consumer culture is foisting on us?' Absolutely not."



## **Local Futures: cultural advisor to the International UNESCO – Zapopan Forum**

**L**ocal Futures was recently invited to Guadalajara, Mexico, to join an international advisory group at the International UNESCO – Zapopan Forum. The event focused on developing "cultural policies for the construction and sustainable development of community in metropolitan areas."

Associate Programs Director Anja Lyngbaek, along with 36 other experts from 16 countries and five continents, was called upon to share her recommendations for the development of a broad set of socially-inclusive policies to improve wellbeing and underpin municipal planning.

A wide range of people took part, including heritage and cultural advocates, artists, filmmakers and activists. Among them were cultural policy expert Avril Louise Joffe (South Africa); actor and UNESCO representative Carol Lawes (Jamaica); filmmaker, screenwriter and Globo d'Oro winner Alessandro Valenti (Italy); photographer and human rights activist Shahidul Alam (Bangladesh); advocate for the empowerment of indigenous peoples through story-telling, Faumuina Felolini (Samoa); and Ritu Sethi, head of Craft Revival Trust in India.

Anja's contribution focused on the need to strengthen cultural self-respect for communities to withstand the onslaught of the global consumer culture. As tweeted by UNESCO-MEXICO, Anja argued that "the greatest threat to cultural and biological diversity is the corporate economic growth model." Local Futures' recommendations included: policy shifts to support local, placed-based businesses working within ecological limits; the adoption of alternatives to GDP, such as Gross National Happiness (GNH); the strengthening of local food systems; local procurement policies for government institutions, particularly for food; placed-based education for sustainable living; and shifting away from expensive flagship cultural centers towards investment in numerous living culture community centers.

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## International Alliance for Localization (IAL)

Anja Lyngbaek, Associate Programs Director

Nearly 100 groups and hundreds more individuals from 58 countries have joined the IAL. Member-organizations differ greatly: among them are Schumacher College (UK); Burburata, a consumer-producer cooperative (Colombia); Proyecto Regeneración, which promotes new approaches to migration (Spain); ZIMSOFF, a national farmers' group that promotes agroecology (Zimbabwe); Green Kashmir, a permaculture-based organization working in a conflict-zone (India); 5th Pillar, a citizens' coalition for democracy (India); and the Post Growth Institute (USA). Members benefit from free resources, like our webinar series and online economics of happiness workshop tutorials.

Several joint ventures took place between Local Futures and member-organizations this year. We co-hosted two conferences in the US, collaborating with Building a Local Economy (BALE) for our conference in Vermont, and with Reconnect Today for the conference in New Mexico (see page 3-4). We also worked with the Global Hub for the Common Good on a new economy world forum in Malaga, Spain (see page 11).



Photos: Cover Sarah Sherif Saleh Ali; p3 Isabel Marlens;  
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p8 Mari Hasle Einang; p9 Henry Coleman, Rebecca Lander;  
Tommaso Galli; p11 Ångsbacka, El Mundo, Kristen Steele;  
p14 Kristy Mulcrone

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