


Local Futures

The Newsletter of the International Society for Ecology and Culture



Note from the Director

Helena Norberg-Hodge

We are privileged, as ambassadors of the Economics of Happiness, to be in regular contact with an ever-larger number of inspiring individuals and movements around the world. We feel more motivated than ever to continue expanding our work to provide a counter-narrative to the stories in the mainstream.

This work is more needed than ever today, with the problems stemming from the corporatized global economy leading to rapidly escalating political polarization. Emotions are high on all sides and extremist interests in many countries have taken advantage of the instability. From the referenda in the UK and Colombia to the elections in the Philippines and the US, we are seeing old tensions intensify and new divisions created.

Meanwhile, there is an understandable sense of desperation within the social justice

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and environmental movements as inequality increases, the climate warms, and the political process unravels.

These trends will only worsen if we continue on the globalization path: societies and the planet will be further torn apart by an economic system that has become like a machine, with computer algorithms swapping trillions of dollars every day without human thought for the real-world consequences.

All this economic activity has very little to do with providing for people's needs: it is a system that chews up mountaintops, devastates the soil, and pollutes the air and water — all for

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corporate profit. And by ignoring real human needs, it is leading to discontent that can easily turn into xenophobia, conflict, and violence.

To solve our problems we must move away from the false assumption that human greed and aggression drive this system. I saw in Ladakh how different religious groups managed to live in harmony with each other, generation after generation. I also saw how the global economy turned harmony into discord by creating artificial scarcity, unemployment, and competition.

Human nature is also blamed for environmental breakdown. In the west, we have been told for decades that greedy consumers are causing climate change — that polar bears are dying because we haven't switched to energy efficient light bulbs, or because we're driving our cars to the store. What is rarely acknowledged is how globalization has massively increased fossil fuel use. The express purpose of the global economy is to increase trade — especially long-distance trade — since that is what creates economic growth. This is self-defeating insanity at a time when cheap sources of fuel are running out and atmospheric carbon is at unprecedented levels.

Fortunately, there is a groundswell of opposition to this system. People are fighting at the policy level and innovating at the grassroots. Local Futures is pleased to be at the forefront of this heartening trend. From our webinars and workshops to our books and films, we are contributing a valued “big picture” perspective that is being used by people around the world.

For decades, we have been raising awareness about how “free trade” treaties have given banks and corporations more and more power over governments. We are beginning to see a major critique of these treaties, and widespread pushback. Trade treaties were even a major topic in the US elections — a sure sign of people power. And that power is getting stronger by the day. The genie is out of the bottle and it can't be put back!

A clear manifestation of this is the local food movement, which has grown by leaps and bounds in both rural and urban areas worldwide. When we launched our Local Food Program more than 30 years ago, local food was not the buzzword it is today. But we recognized that localized food systems simultaneously strengthen local communities and protect the environment, and we made local food

a focal point of our efforts. In the UK, we worked with other organizations to set up the country's first box scheme and its first farmers' market in modern times. We were able to put local food on the national agenda, and our original message is now embodied in hundreds of projects across the country — some of which collaborated with us on this year's events (see page 3).

We are having a similar impact with our Economics of Happiness conferences, which this year were held in Florence, Italy, and Jeonju, South Korea. For us, it is heartwarming and extremely gratifying to see how these conferences pull together such a remarkable range of movements and thought leaders. The Italian conference, which featured numerous speakers from the localization movement in Italy and internationally, attracted over 1,200 participants and extensive media coverage in both the mainstream and independent press (see page 4). We have also been working in Italy with the 5 Star Movement — a political party and grassroots organization that offers an inclusive and localized alternative to politics-as-usual.

In Korea, we are working with a network of 35 mayors, including the mayor of Seoul, to promote a global-to-local shift. This same network has been screening *The Economics of Happiness* across the country, and they are eager to continue working with us in the coming year. The mayor of Jeonju thanked us for opening his eyes to the profound significance of localization, and the entire local government offered such warmth and hospitality that many of us had tears in our eyes when we left.

These experiences leave us more convinced than ever of the importance of bringing together a broad range of people and organizations, and doing so internationally. Although the modern era has often been described as the Information Age, a great deal of the information exchanged is little more than corporate advertising, angry tweets, vain social media posts and noise of all sorts. Meanwhile, vitally important information is not being disseminated. This is where Local Futures is playing a unique role in promoting a new economy: we act as a bridge between grassroots movements across the world that can be greatly strengthened by information-sharing, dialogue and collaboration.

I hope you will enjoy reading about our projects over the past year and will continue to offer your support for the future.

The Economics of Happiness Program

Economics of Happiness in the UK

Kristen Steele, Associate Programs Director

Nearly five years ago, we launched *The Economics of Happiness* in London. Since that time, we've seen the issues raised in the film take on an even greater importance in the UK. Brexit has created both a crisis and an opportunity — a crisis in the dividing of British society, but an opportunity to shape a new future for the country. In September, Local Futures co-organized two events that highlighted the challenges that lie ahead and the opportunities offered by a global-to-local shift.



The first event, co-hosted with Initiatives of Change and the Global Hub for the Common Good, was oriented towards both the business and activist communities. Featuring a combination of brainstorming sessions and talks, speakers included socially-responsible businessman and UN official Lawrence Bloom, Swedish eco-village founder Stephen Hinton, social entrepreneur Diego Isabel La Moneda, and Local Futures Director Helena Norberg-Hodge. Diego also presented the launch of a new global network — New Economy and Social Innovation (NESI) — of which Local Futures is a part.

The second event was co-organized with London-based Green House Think Tank. Speakers included Green economist and Member of European Parliament Molly Scott Cato, former New Economics Foundation chairman James Skinner, Green House co-founder Rupert Read, writer and activist Shaun Chamberlin, and Helena Norberg-Hodge. A broad

overview of the problems of globalization was followed by an afternoon session focused on local food — the heart of the localization movement. Anja Lyngbaek of Local Futures spoke of the global spread of local food initiatives, while Bruno Lacey and Charlotte O'Connor described two local food initiatives in London. It was particularly exciting to hear about Loughborough Farm, a volunteer-run community center and farm in urban London, which has just been granted a 20-year lease to expand on their current site. The day concluded with a lively panel on Brexit and the prospects for a more localized UK.

A special collaborative report was also launched at this event: *Post-growth Localisation*. Written by Rupert Read and Helena Norberg-Hodge, this booklet covers the most pertinent issues facing a post-Brexit UK. It contrasts eight key features of globalization with eight features of localization, and advocates for a new set of international policies and governing institutions. A pdf version of the report is available for download from the Local Futures website.



Local Futures collaborated in three other Economics of Happiness events in the UK this year, facilitated by Associate Programs Director Anja Lyngbaek. The first of these, which also featured the participation of Helena Norberg-Hodge, was co-organized by Transition Town Totnes. Two more workshops were held in Wales — at the Center for Alternative Technology in Machynlleth, and at the University of Lampeter. A number of participants in these workshops expressed interest in hosting DIY Economics of Happiness workshops in the future.

Economics of Happiness Conference in Italy

Alex Jensen, Project Coordinator

Florence, Italy, was an appropriate place to host our 8th international Economics of Happiness conference. What better city than the ancient European center of international banking and trade in which to assemble Italy's contemporary localization movement — today's dissidents against that old system? Despite its long history in the development of the commercial economy that besets the whole world — and despite significant impacts to the country from corporate globalization — Italy retains much promise for a “re-renaissance” of sorts, a society of local production and consumption rooted in principles of justice and ecological integrity. The vernacular architecture and settlements — many of them bequeathed by centuries-old merchant wealth — are well-situated for new localization initiatives. By their historic stature, they also stand as barriers to the rationalized infrastructural grids necessary to global investors and trade.



And what better day to hold this conference than Gandhi's birthday, October 2nd, now also known as “International Day of Non-Violence”. Gandhi saw and exposed the violence and structural irresponsibility inherent in economic expansionism/imperialism, and conversely, recognized that a non-violent society required a place-based economics guided by an ethos of sufficiency. “When production and consumption both become localized,” he wrote, “the temptation to speed up production, indefinitely and at any price, disappears. All the endless difficulties and problems that our present day economic system presents, too, would then come to an end.”

The conference was co-hosted by Local Futures

and the Italian NGO Mani Tese, a global justice and anti-hunger organization, and counted dozens of other organizations as sponsors, partners, media partners, and allies. These groups are working on a gamut of issues to do with resistance to the corporate economy and (re)construction of alternatives oriented towards social and environmental justice and well-being.

Enthusiasm for exploring and debating the big-picture issues raised at Economics of Happiness conferences was evident not only from the impressive and extensive group of organizational supporters, but also in the 1,200 people who filled the elegant Teatro Verdi — most of whom stayed all day long, from 9am to 7pm, listening to lectures, forging new friendships, networking in the foyer, and sharing local, organic food. In addition to an opening keynote by Local Futures' Helena Norberg-Hodge, they listened to translated lectures by notable international speakers including eco-feminist Vandana Shiva, Transition Town pioneer Rob Hopkins, local business advocate Michael Shuman, Indian environmentalist Ashish Kothari, and unschooling proponent Manish Jain.

Radical economist and philosopher Serge Latouche delighted the audience with his trenchant take-down of neo-classical economics delivered in his inimitable French-Italian. A host of amazing Italian activists, scholars, and critics rounded out the day's lectures, including non-violence scholar Gabriela Calderaro; Carlo Sibilia, the parliamentarian of the 5 Star Movement; Maurizio Pallante, honorary president of the Movimento per la Decrescita Felice (Happy Degrowth Movement); noted peace activist Rocco Altieri; clinical psychologist Dr. Giuliana Mieli; and Rosanno Ercolini, president of Zero-Waste Europe and 2013 winner of the Goldman Environmental Prize. (For a complete list of speakers and their bios, see www.economiadellafelicità.it).

The conference tapped into an emerging



movement in Italy, visible in the wonderful ‘map of alternatives’ across the country being assembled by another conference partner, Italia Che Cambia (“Italy That Changes”): <http://mappa.italiachecambia.org>. The spirit of the day was captured by conference press officer Giorgia Vezzoli: “Lately conferences do not attract many people, but this was something incredible!”

One left the conference feeling a palpable sense of inspiration and encouragement, a hopeful vision of myriad converging currents of sanity and commitment to a better Italy, and by extension a better world.

Special thanks to Gloria Germani, the main organizer and instigator of the event and to Lucy De Fazio and her team of volunteers for their tireless, selfless efforts towards making everything happen.

Economics of Happiness Conference in South Korea

Marjana Kos, Executive Assistant



Following on the success of the 2015 Economics of Happiness Conference in Jeonju, Local Futures organized a second conference in collaboration with the Jeonju city government and an association of 35 mayors. International speakers at the conference included:

George Ferguson, mayor of Bristol, UK, 2012-2016. A leader in the localist movement, George has created widespread interest in local currencies, among other things by taking his full salary in Bristol pounds.

Jonathan Dawson, Head of Economics at Schumacher College in Devon, UK. Jonathan is a former President of the Global Ecovillage Network, and co-author of the Gaia Education sustainable economy curriculum.

Zan Boag, formerly a banking executive and journalist. Zan has launched two new ad-free magazines – New Philosopher and Womankind – which seek solutions to the fundamental problems faced by humankind.

Raymond Epp was instrumental in establishing the first Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) projects in Western Canada, Nebraska, USA, and Japan in the 1990s. His commitment to growing food to feed local people led him to oppose the introduction of genetically modified crops in Japan and more recently to organize resistance to the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP).



This conference is part of the Jeonju city council’s long-term commitment to a global-to-local shift and the strengthening of place-based economies. According to these local leaders, the conferences are not only inspiring – an antidote to anger and despair – they also provide practical and strategic tools for action.

We were thrilled to learn just how committed the local government is to building up a local food movement in Jeonju, and to supporting local businesses and entrepreneurs. As part of this commitment, the mayor and the city council would like to make this an annual event!

DIY Economics of Happiness Workshop

Anja Lyngbaek, Associate Programs Director

Local Futures worked closely this year with a small team of volunteers to develop a Do-it-Yourself Economics of Happiness Workshop and toolkit. The goal was to create a tool that people anywhere can use to raise awareness about the workings and costs of the global economy, and to kick-start effective global-to-local action.

The workshop uses our film *The Economics of Happiness* as a springboard to a discussion about the broad impacts of the global growth economy, and about localization as a strategy for systemic change. Various exercises take participants through a reflective and analytical process that culminates in the elaboration of a personal or group-based global-to-local action plan, depending on whether the workshop is hosted for individuals or groups. Plans are centered around five key action-elements: connect, educate, resist, renew and celebrate.

The two-pronged *resist & renew* approach of the workshop involves resisting the corporate-controlled global growth economy and renewing healthy place-based economies subject to ecological limits.

The DIY workshop toolkit, which is available free of charge, consists of *The Economics of Happiness* film, a step-by-step guide to running a workshop, and specially designed exercises, templates and reading materials. The toolkit is presently available in English and Italian, but we hope to make it available in more languages soon.

We would like to express our deep gratitude to Angie Polkey, Susanne Stoiber and Robert Kuhfus, who shared their expertise and volunteered their time to help develop the workshop model. Also a special thanks to Angie and Susanne for fearlessly piloting workshops for diverse groups of people in Wales, Germany and Ladakh.

Economics of Happiness Translations

Steve Gorelick, Managing/Programs Director

The Economics of Happiness film remains one of our most effective tools for disseminating the global-to-local message. In response to worldwide interest, in 2016 we added twelve more languages to our Vimeo on Demand channel, including Ukrainian, Farsi, Nepali, Norwegian,

Swedish, Portuguese, Greek and Chinese.

During the year we also created an abridged, 20-minute version of the film, which is available for free download or streaming from our Vimeo and YouTube channels. This shortened version of the film has already been translated into Spanish, Italian, French, Japanese and Nepali, with more translations in the works.

There is such an urgency for shifting our economic models and your film, which I often show in classes, offers such hope."

~ Educator from Portland, Oregon

Most of this translation work is being done by volunteers — individuals who embrace the message of the film, and want to see it disseminated in their homelands. Although there have been scores of people across the world involved in this endeavor, we want to acknowledge the efforts of Marisha Stock, who worked diligently for the past two years on the Russian and Ukrainian translations of the film and trailer, and continues to promote the film in both countries. We also appreciate the hard work of Bertrand Raguét, who helped us add subtitles to the film in numerous languages this past year. We are particularly grateful to Bertrand for overcoming a series of perplexing technical obstacles to the Farsi (Persian) version. Many thanks to you both, and to all the volunteer translators who helped us this year!

Planet Local

Isabel Marlens, Researcher

Sean Keller, Media and Outreach Coordinator

We are now in the third year of Planet Local, our web series that showcases inspiring localization initiatives from around the world — in such diverse areas as community renewable energy, food and farming, local business, alternative education, community rights and more. At a time when so much of the news we read from around the world is bad, Planet Local helps us remember that positive change at the local level is happening every day.

Recent examples include The Zimbabwe Smallholder Organic Farmers Forum (which helps small farmers defend their livelihoods); the Dechinta Centre for Research and Learning (an

Indigenous-led initiative for land-based learning in Canada); Low Carbon Hub (a community-owned renewable energy initiative in the UK); Soul Fire Farm (an organic farm and training center that works to end racism in the US food system); Fair Tax Town (a small village in Wales intent on preventing big business from evading taxes); and the newly-opened Palestine Heirloom Seed Library (which works to preserve not only traditional seeds, but the traditional way of life.) New examples are posted each month.

While our Planet Local series continues to highlight local renewal projects around the world, our third annual Planet Local Photo Contest allowed our supporters to show us the impacts of localization (and globalization) in their own communities. This year's entries gave us inside perspectives on, among other things, the life of rural herders in Nepal, plant nurseries made of papyrus on the banks of the Upper Nile, a weavers' cottage in Thailand, and a rural public library in the mountains of Italy. Thirteen countries were represented in this year's contest, which was judged by renowned photographers Jim Hurst and Pierre Ferron.

The breathtaking collection of photos we received serves as a powerful reminder of the cultures and ecologies at risk from the global economy. We hope that sharing them with the world will inspire others to help keep these images real. Winning photos and all submissions can be viewed at www.localfutures.org/photo-contest-2016

Tribute to Doug Tompkins

Douglas Rainsford Tompkins
March 20, 1943 – December 8, 2015

With the death late last year of Doug Tompkins, mother Gaia lost one of her most formidable allies, and Local Futures lost one of its closest colleagues, supporters and friends.

Over the course of his life, Doug Tompkins was an outdoorsman, businessman, philanthropist, agriculturalist, and activist. In the mid-1960s he co-founded the outdoor equipment and clothing company The North Face, as well as the clothing company Esprit. But by the late 1980s Tompkins realized that the consumer culture he'd helped promote as a businessman was part of an industrial

growth economy that was fundamentally toxic to the natural world. He sold his stake in Esprit and used the proceeds to endow the Foundation for Deep Ecology, an activist-oriented environmental foundation. Local Futures/ISEC was one of the first groups the foundation supported.

Doug was also one of the founders of the International Forum on Globalization (IFG), an important North-South think tank. Helena Norberg-Hodge was instrumental in the IFG's creation: "I invited Doug to Stockholm where we had organized a 'Future of Progress' meeting to question the dominant globalization agenda from the perspective of both North and South. This is where I introduced Doug to Teddy Goldsmith, Vandana Shiva, Martin Khor and others. There was enthusiasm on all sides, and a fertile exchange of ideas, strategies and experiences. After the Stockholm meeting, Doug and Jerry Mander, the head of the Foundation for Deep Ecology, hosted several international meetings that led to our setting up the IFG."

In recent years, Tompkins and his wife, Kris, bought and conserved over 2 million acres of wilderness in Chile and Argentina, with the goal of preserving its biodiversity and wild nature. Much of this land is now national parkland in the two countries.

Over the years, Doug became one of Helena's closest friends and most valued allies: "I never encountered anyone more determined and hard-working. He was brilliant and tireless, and he never stopped reading and studying in search of the deep root causes of our socio-ecological crises. We were in regular contact, and not a year went by without us meeting face to face. We often had heated arguments, but at a deep level we were singing from the same hymn sheet. He was a very rare and dear soulmate, and I sorely miss him."



The Ladakh Project

Anja Lyngbaek, Associate Programs Director

It has been 39 years since the founding of the Ladakh Project — the forerunner of Local Futures/ISEC. From the start we cautioned against the blind adoption of western-style “development” while promoting alternative models, including the use of eco-technologies to enable significant improvements in living standards without creating a dependence on fossil fuels.

In 1977 there were relatively few tourists visiting Ladakh. This year, more than 200,000 arrived in just a few months — the largest number ever, and a lot for a region with only 270,000 inhabitants and a fragile environment. There are now 1,000 guesthouses and hotels in the capital, Leh, and 5,000 taxi drivers whose clients are mostly tourists. New roads have been built and private cars are commonplace. Young people are still being drawn out of the villages into the city, where they are schooled for an urban, industrial lifestyle that has little to do with Ladakh’s culture, resources and environment.

Despite these trends, I feel cautiously optimistic. Many of the appropriate technologies that we were alone in introducing nearly four decades ago are today promoted by a multitude of NGOs, as well as by the Hill Council, Ladakh’s local government. Passive solar heating systems can be found on almost every roof in the capital, and photovoltaic panels are a common sight. Composting toilets — a technology indigenous to Ladakh — remain in use in most households, and continue to provide nutrients for the fields. Many new buildings mirror traditional Ladakhi architecture and are constructed of natural, locally-available materials. Home gardens still flourish. Traditional farming has diminished, but is far from abandoned. Organic agriculture is promoted by several local NGOs, including the Ladakh Ecological Development Group (LEDeG) and the Ladakh Environment and Health Organisation (LEHO), and the Hill Council has set a goal of 100% organic farming regionwide. Most encouraging of all, there is growing interest in local alternatives to the global “development” model: people are increasingly aware of the importance and value of place-based knowledge and skills, and numerous inspiring initiatives are underway.

While we cannot take credit for the good work of other groups and individuals, there is no doubt

that our efforts to raise awareness and promote alternatives have contributed significantly to the positive trends now visible.

Here are some of the highlights of our activities in 2016:

Workshops

The Women’s Alliance Centre provided the perfect setting for two Global to Local Workshops. More than 80 people from 19 different countries participated, including 20 young Ladakhi students. The workshops took a close look at the mechanisms and consequences of globalization in Ladakh and abroad, and explored strategies to create and strengthen strong local economies and communities. A number of important Ladakhi change-makers contributed, including Mohammed Deen from LEHO, Morup Dolma from the Women’s Alliance (WAL), Dolma Tsering from the Ladakh Buddhist Association (who gave a compelling talk about the role of women and the work of WAL), and noted film producer Stanzin Dorjai (who spoke on place-based knowledge and traditions).

The highly interactive workshops included: exercises that tackled controversial issues in the global-to-local debate; a “mad economy guessing game” illustrating the illogic of our economic growth model; a lively world café discussion; inspiring stories of successful localization initiatives from around the world; and a global-to-local action planning exercise.



Solar Powered Centre

One of our hands-on projects this year was the installation of a solar photovoltaic system at the Women’s Alliance Centre. Richard Hendin, our Ladakh Logistics Coordinator, rescued an unused solar power system and installed it with the help of Mike Sullivan, an American solar engineer who volunteered his expertise. Richard and Mike also trained WAL staff to maintain the system.



Tourist Education

With the number of visitors to Ladakh continuing to grow, our tourist education program has become more important than ever.

- We continued to distribute our Mindful Tourism brochure and other materials that provide guidelines for tourists, enabling them to play a more positive role in Ladakh.
- We hosted daily screenings of our films, *Ancient Futures* and *The Economics of Happiness* (on alternate days), followed by an hour-long discussion. The discussions were led by Local Futures' facilitator, Henry Coleman. Film screenings continue to be an effective way to get visitors to Ladakh to rethink preconceived notions of "progress" and "development" – not only in Ladakh but in their home countries as well.
- A tailor-made "rethinking development" program was prepared for the Canadian group Operation Groundswell, which runs a gap year "backpacking with a purpose" project. The collaboration was a success and is set to continue next year.

Special screenings and teachings

Special film screenings and discussions were held in Leh at The Jewish House and the Mahabodi Meditation Centre, and in Choglamsar at the Central Institute of Buddhist Studies (CIBS). More than 400 students participated in the event at CIBS, which

was also the venue for a series of talks on alternatives to the consumer culture, place-based education and knowledge, and localization initiatives worldwide.

Farm Project

Our Farm Project enables tourists to assist and learn from Ladakhi farming families, especially during harvest time. This year's activities took place in the villages of Likir and Stakna. Helping out on the farm is a rewarding experience for participants and the labor they provide is much appreciated by their Ladakhi hosts. Most importantly, the participation of foreigners helps counteract the multiple forces that have led to a decline in farming – including the notion among many young Ladakhis that farming is "uncool".

The Local Futures team in Ladakh this year included Richard Hendin, Henry Coleman and Anja Lyngbaek. A big thanks to the amazing volunteers that assisted us: Mari Hasle Einang, Philip Tripp, Rebecca Carruthers, Mike Sullivan, Hugo and Luke.

I was finally able to experience first-hand the dynamics discussed in *Ancient Futures*... Spending time at the Womens Alliance of Ladakh and on a farm stay in Basgo village has only confirmed my beliefs.

~ Marchéta Wright, Professor of International Relations, Lynn University, USA

International Alliance for Localization

Anja Lyngbaek, Associate Programs Director

Last year we launched the International Alliance for Localization (IAL) – our most ambitious networking initiative to date. The purpose of the IAL is to serve as an information- and strategy-sharing network for the many groups and individuals around the world working on a global-to-local shift, and to provide the localization movement with a clear and powerful collective voice.

A multitude of localization initiatives are already underway worldwide, from local food and community-owned renewable energy projects to local businesses alliances. These initiatives are resulting in multiple benefits: lower carbon footprints; healthier food; more dignified livelihoods; closer community ties, and more. However, localization is not yet widely recognized as a systemic strategy for change. The IAL is a step towards addressing this.

With members from 58 different countries, the IAL proves that there is broad interest in localization worldwide. IAL members include individuals, groups, NGOs, trade unions and local businesses. Among those are more than 70 member-groups working on issues ranging from social and environmental justice to sustainable farming, from workers' rights to indigenous knowledge, from holistic education to policy change and beyond.

Through the IAL, we share information about inspiring localization initiatives and strategies, and about campaigns to resist the corporate growth economy. Our Global-to-Local Webinar Series, free for IAL members, addresses key issues on a monthly basis, while our Planet Local series regularly showcases inspiring initiatives, many of them part of the IAL network. We are keen to do more: one new project on the drawing board is a Voices from the IAL podcast series.

For more information or to join the IAL, check out the IAL page on our website.

Global to Local Webinars

Sean Keller, Media and Outreach Coordinator

As part of our International Alliance for Localization (IAL) initiative, we launched a Global to Local Webinar Series in December 2015. The webinars are designed to address key issues in the global-to-local debate, approaching them from the perspective of both *resistance* and *renewal*. The webinars allow IAL members to listen to live conversations between a representative of Local Futures (most often Helena Norberg-Hodge) and distinguished guest presenters who are active in the struggle for social justice and environmental sanity.

The webinars not only give participants the opportunity to ask questions of our presenters and to get answers in real time, they allow participants and presenters alike to share their knowledge with other like-minded individuals, and to learn about new initiatives, projects and organizations. Several webinar participants said they left feeling inspired and energized, and more aware of the big-picture importance of their local activist work.

Webinar topics have ranged from climate change to local investment, from local food to debt, and from free trade to effective activism.

Among the guest presenters so far have been Michael Shuman (an internationally-recognized expert on community economics), Charles Eisenstein (author of *Sacred Economics*), Manish Jain (unschooling advocate from India), and Stephanie Roth (campaign coordinator of the Stop TTIP movement in Europe).

The Global to Local Webinar Series will continue through the end of this year. Upcoming webinars will include a discussion of democracy and the commons, and an exploration of community-based renewable energy projects featuring Bill McKibben, co-founder of the global climate movement 350.org. A recording of each webinar is available after the event. Check out our past webinars at www.localfutures.org/programs/global-to-local/webinars.



Animation

In line with our *education for action* mission, we are branching out into a new medium of communication: animation. Our forthcoming animated film summarizes our global-to-local vision in less than 5 minutes, engaging those who are familiar with the message as much as newcomers. Using whimsical drawings and narration, it emphasizes how the global economy undermines our most universal of aspirations — clean air, clean water, a stable climate, happiness — and illustrates the key ways in which localization can turn things around. The film will be released soon on our website, our Vimeo and YouTube channels and on social media. We hope it will be a useful, bite-sized introduction to both our work and the wider localization movement.



Tribute to Bill Mollison

Alex Jensen, Project Coordinator

Local Futures pays tribute to Bill Mollison, visionary co-founder of permaculture, who passed away on September 24. Permaculture was the portmanteau Mollison and his partner David Holmgren coined to describe a system of ecological thinking and design aimed at the restoration of land through the radical re-localization of food production. Permaculture is based on replacing intensive inputs of energy and extensive outputs of waste with humility, intelligence and an intimate camaraderie with the natural world. By looking at systems deeply and holistically, Mollison and Holmgren were able to debunk many taken-for-

granted assumptions about industrial agriculture, exposing them as myths and inversions of the truth. They showed that the much-ballyhooed efficiency and productivity of the industrial system, for example, falls apart once the veneer is peeled back to expose the mines, power plants, global infrastructure, poison, and landfills of waste — all subsidized by government hand-outs — underpinning the whole apparatus. Under the same lens, ecological, diverse, small-scale, local production appears genuinely efficient, logical, productive, and yes, rational, sans hidden disasters scattered around the globe.

This way of looking at the world, skillfully developed in the first two chapters of the weighty *Permaculture Designers' Manual*, planted the seeds for the permacultural way of acting in the world: instead of few gigantic industrial monocultures for global trade, innumerable small ecological polycultures for local needs; instead of huge, polluting mines and centralized electricity plants, passive, decentralized harvesting of existing sources of coolth and heat. More and more such observations arise, until one soon realizes that everything must change. And permaculture provides clear guideposts for making that change.

Although there is room to integrate innovation and new ideas from permaculture into traditional systems, especially where traditional knowledge has been marginalized or lost, it is telling how much the permaculture vision captures the look and dynamics of a typical peasant village and house-yard arrangement. Mollison worked extensively in the South to improve or re-generate local self-reliance, but he acknowledged that permaculture learned from and mimicked the traditional practices of low-energy localized cultures. In this and many other ways, permaculture turns the arrow of “development” in the opposite of its conventional direction.

Today, Mollison’s great legacy is embodied in the hundreds of thousands of permaculturists around the world carrying forward his vision of people-healing through earth-healing.

A New Edition of *Ancient Futures*

This year Local Futures published a 25th Anniversary edition of *Ancient Futures*, with a new preface by Helena. An international bestseller, it has been immensely gratifying to see just how influential the book has been:

"Everyone who cares about the future of this planet and their children's future should read this book"

~ *The Guardian*

"Some books provide insights into our problems; others offer guidelines for a different future. *Ancient Futures* does both brilliantly. A true classic."

~ **Bill McKibben**

"*Ancient Futures* was a critical early warning about the enormous social, spiritual and ecological costs of exporting 'Western' lifestyles to every corner of the globe."

~ **Naomi Klein**

"*Ancient Futures* was a formative influence on my worldview. That it is still so relevant today, 25 years later, shows how far ahead of its time it was."

~ **Charles Eisenstein**

"*Ancient Futures* had a huge impact on the course of my life's work. Its central message is wonderfully empowering. It shows us that another, better world is possible!"

~ **Frances Moore Lappé**

"This passionate book is a gift to us all... an experience-based manifesto for change."

~ **Alice Waters**

"A classic when it appeared 25 years ago and even more so today...a story that offers authentic hope that we can create a humane, joyful, and life-centered future."

~ **David W. Orr**

"When I first read *Ancient Futures* in 1992, it changed my life, and it has colored my thinking in all the years since."

~ **Richard Heinberg**

"*Ancient Futures* is one of the most important books of our time...[I]n these pages one encounters a living example of a future that could save us all."

~ **Susan Griffin**

"Now more than ever we need to read and heed the lessons Helena Norberg Hodge offered us 25 years ago."

~ **Vicki Robin**

"*Ancient Futures* seems all the more relevant today because of the widespread contemporary efforts to build up local economies. ... This book is a gem."

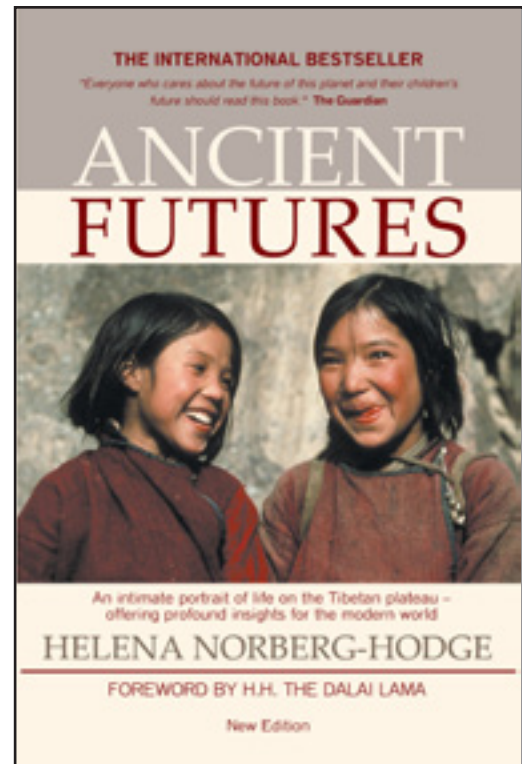
~ **Charlene Spretnak**

"*Ancient Futures* is a classic. Today, this message is more important than ever."

~ **Mary Evelyn Tucker**

"A lesson for all the world. Lucid and poignant, *Ancient Futures* [is] a classic of human ecology and unyielding hope."

~ **Stephanie Mills**



The updated edition of *Ancient Futures* can be obtained from the Local Futures shop, as well as from both online and brick-and-mortar bookshops.

Other Local Futures Publications

Localization: Essential Steps to an Economics of Happiness

by Helena Norberg-Hodge

A new edition of our popular report, *Localization: Essential Steps to an Economics of Happiness*, has just been released. Divided into three parts, this booklet provides a thorough overview of the global-to-local vision. Part 1 details the current economic system and its impacts on people and planet. A vision of economic localization is presented in Part 2, along with the multiple benefits of going local. Part 3 describes how to make localization happen, including the necessary policy shifts and grassroots initiatives in many sectors – from education to energy, agriculture to banking. Chock full of statistics and examples of localization in action, the report also includes sections on Ladakh and “Big Picture Activism”. It helpfully counters many of the most common objections to localization, such as “Doesn’t localization mean isolationism?” and “Don’t we need industrial agriculture to feed the world?”

Localization: Essential Steps to an Economics of Happiness is the essential primer on localization. A printed version is now on sale in our online shop and a free pdf is available for download.

Climate Change or System Change?

A Local Futures Action Paper

Following on from the Paris climate talks in December 2015, Local Futures released a 16-page climate action paper. In it we argued that globalization is the driving force behind increased greenhouse gas emissions, and that the climate problem can only be tackled effectively if governments stop subsidizing globalization, and begin pursuing a localization agenda instead. The paper is available for free download from our website.

Articles, Essays and Blog Posts

The online publication *Excellence Reporter* featured Helena Norberg-Hodge as one of the “great thinkers, artists, leaders, musicians, CEOs” and others asked to respond to the question, “What is the meaning of

life?” Helena’s essay focused on a spiritual connection to the natural world.

In the run-up to the Brexit referendum in the UK, *The Ecologist* magazine published an essay by Helena Norberg-Hodge, Rupert Read and Thomas Walgren titled, “We must localise the EU and curb corporate power – but does that mean in or out?” The essay faulted both sides in the debate: the “Leave” campaign for appealing to narrow nationalism and xenophobia, the “Remain” campaign for ignoring the EU’s role in promoting corporate-friendly globalization. The article was also posted on the Local Futures blog (under the title, “Why Global Capital Fears Brexit”), and it was widely viewed, cited, and reposted.

The results of the Brexit vote defied conventional wisdom, inducing numerous publications to seek Local Futures’ perspective. Among them were the print and online magazine *Positive News*, which printed her essay, “Beyond Brexit: Localisation Key to Britain’s Future”, and *Resurgence* magazine, where “Beyond Brexit: Look Locally for Hope” appeared. Another view on the vote came from Associate Programs Director Kristen Steele, in her Local Futures blog post, “How Globalization Divides Us: Perspectives from a Dual Citizen.”

Brexit wasn’t the only issue explored on the Local Futures blog, which featured a wide range of thought-provoking posts from our own staff as well as our international network. Because most of these posts were picked up by other sites – from *Common Dreams* and *Huffington Post* to *CounterPunch*, *Truthout*, *Resilience* and more – they reached huge numbers of people. Here are excerpts from some of our most visited blogs of the year:

Adivasi Economics

Felix Padel

“An Adivasi economy, in its traditional or pre-globalization form at least, was based in many ways on ecological principles. In the words of a Kond elder in Kandhamal district, Odisha, ‘Where are the saints in your society? In this village we are all saints. We consume little, share everything, and waste nothing.’”

Globalization and the American Dream

Helena Norberg-Hodge and Steven Gorelick

“What is often called ‘American culture’ is no longer a product of the American people: it is instead an artificial consumer culture created and projected by corporate advertising and media. This consumer culture is fundamentally different from the diverse cultures that for millennia were shaped by climate, topography, and the local biota – by a dialogue between humans and the natural world. This is a new phenomenon, something that has never happened before: a culture determined by technological and economic forces, rather than human and ecological needs...”

From Local Pants to Local Energy: The Case for Localizing our Economies

Erica Etelson

“Localization enables us to live within the material and human limits of our bioregion rather than raiding the resources of other bioregions as is the current practice, in which the global South serves as a labor and natural resource colony for its northern overlords (enabling us to postpone the day of reckoning our consumptive lifestyle begets). Re-localizing and re-decentralizing our economies are prerequisites for human survival on a hot, crowded planet with finite resources. To paraphrase James Hansen of NASA fame, we can either change our ways or they will be changed for us...”

How Globalization Divides Us: Perspectives on Brexit from a Dual Citizen

Kristen Steele

“I’m a diehard believer in independence, freedom, democracy, and strong local economies. For some, the Brexit result represented those things. But like every other choice offered in the global economy these days, Brexit was a false one. Getting out of Europe does nothing to address the real problems in UK society—or the world. We’re still headed down the same destructive path together, but now more fractious and divided than ever...”

From Livelihoods to Deadlihoods

Ashish Kothari

“Economic progress, we are told, is about moving from primary sector jobs to manufacturing and services. And so the livelihoods that keep all of us alive – farming, forestry, pastoralism, fisheries, and related crafts – are considered backward. In India, this marginalizes 700 million-800 million people, two-thirds of its population...”

Branding Tradition

Steven Gorelick

“The forces that are transforming maple syrup production in Vermont are similar to those that have decimated small farms around the world. In both cases, the ‘technological treadmill’ requires producers to make continual investments in equipment just to keep from falling behind – a race that small producers can’t win...”

Strangely Like Gulag: Education and the Industrial Machine

Suprabha Seshan

“For many years, I’ve seen more and more of my rural and tribal neighbors pack their children off to school. Now, every morning between 8:00 and 9:00 am in this upwardly-mobile-yet-backward district, the country roads are full of children commuting to school, hoisting bags laden with what they believe is the wisdom and knowhow of modern culture. Everyone (parents, children, the state and society) deems this to be good and necessary...”

Clean Energy Won’t Save Us – Only a New Economic System Can

Jason Hickel

“When it comes to climate change, the problem is not just the type of energy we are using, it’s what we’re doing with it. What would we do with 100% clean energy? Exactly what we are doing with fossil fuels: raze more forests, build more meat farms, expand industrial agriculture, produce more cement, and fill more landfill sites, all of which will pump deadly amounts of greenhouse gas into the air. We will do these things because our economic system demands endless compound growth...”

Changing Everything

Steven Gorelick

“A scaling-down of the corporate-led global economy and a strengthening of diverse, localized economies would simultaneously address all of the most serious problems we face – including climate change. For this reason, ‘big picture activism’ has the potential to unite climate change activists, small farmers, peace advocates, environmentalists, social justice groups, labor unions, indigenous rights activists, main street business owners, and many more under a single banner. And that really could change everything...”

Other Local Futures activities

In addition to our Economics of Happiness gatherings (see pages 3-5), our staff was busy with numerous other events in 2016. Here are some of the highlights:

While in South Korea, Local Futures Director Helena Norberg-Hodge met with political leaders, including mayors and legislative representatives, at the National Assembly of Korea. She later had separate meetings with the mayors of Seoul and Siheung, a city noted for its sustainable development efforts. Helena also gave public talks in Siheung and in Hwaseong City, one of Korea’s fastest growing cities.

In Japan, Helena met with the mayor of Naganuma and a number of local organizers working on creative sustainability projects, and urged them to put “going local” onto the political agenda. She also

It is rewarding to see that your pioneering work in the field is being echoed by more and more organizations. Let’s hope the momentum keeps growing.”

~ Norton Smith,
Whole Systems
Foundation

spoke on community-building following a public screening of *The Economics of Happiness* in Naganuma. At Meiji Gakuin University in Tokyo, Helena gave a talk accompanied by Keibo Oiwa – author of *Slow is Beautiful* and a speaker at several of our Economics of Happiness conferences.

In Hong Kong, Helena gave a talk at Lingnan University, followed by a two-day workshop on Rethinking Globalization and Development,

organized by the local NGO Green Hub.

In October, Helena was invited to Myanmar (Burma) for a public lecture, hosted by the Metta Development Foundation, a local NGO.

Helena also gave numerous interviews during the year. In South Korea, she was featured in *Maeil Economy Daily*, one of the country’s major newspapers. In Japan she was interviewed on the television network NHK, by web magazine *Greenz*, and the print magazine *Murmur*. In the US, Helena did a major two-part interview for the web-based news site *Truthout*.

While in the UK, Helena was particularly pleased to be involved in *Resurgence* magazine’s 50th anniversary celebrations. The centerpiece event was a conference at Worcester College, Oxford, where Helena spoke alongside other long-time *Resurgence* contributors, including Bill McKibben, Vandana Shiva, Caroline Lucas (Britain’s first Green Party MP), and Satish Kumar, the magazine’s editor-in-chief. Helena said, “It was delightful to spend time with Satish, whom I’ve known for almost four decades. Now in his 80th year, he is more inspiring than ever – sparkling with energy and great Gandhian wisdom.” Helena will be teaching a course with Satish at Schumacher College next July.

Project Coordinator Alex Jensen spoke at the International Degrowth Conference in Budapest, Hungary. In his talk, titled “Degrowth in the South: the Case of India”, Alex pointed out that “Growth critics who shy away from critique of growth in the South – or even argue for its continuing necessity out of a sense of justice – betray a contradictory belief in ‘trickle-down’ economics that they rightly denounce in the North.” Alex also visited numerous localization groups and initiatives in Europe. Look for them in upcoming Planet Local posts.

Executive Assistant Marjana Kos continued her work with the Permaculture movement in Slovenia. She teaches the economics module at Permaculture Design Courses, using *The Economics of Happiness* film as a tool. Marjana organized the Slovenian translation of the film in 2012.

Managing/Programs Director Steven Gorelick spoke and responded to questions following a screening of *The Economics of Happiness* at BALE (Building a Local Economy) in South Royalton, Vermont. BALE, which works locally to “build appropriately-scaled solutions from the bottom up”, is an active member of the IAL.

We thought readers might enjoy this witty poem, written by Helena Norberg-Hodge's husband and Local Futures' International Programs Director, for her 70th birthday.

"On Buying a Gift for a Localist Partner"

by John Page

Was it made in a local workshop?

Was it crafted by local hands?

Were any of its component parts

Imported from foreign lands?

Was the energy used to make it

Produced in the local shire?

Or was it brought in from far afield

On bleak high-tension wire?

Were the rights of the workers respected?

Did they know all their bosses by name?

Or were they treated like modern-day slaves,

As pawns in a zero-sum game?

Was it sold in a local market,

In the neighbourhood where it was made?

Or was it beholden to NAFTA and GATT,

A product of global trade?

And what of the profit it rendered,

Did it stay in the local town?

Or did it all go to a TNC

On the lie it would trickle down?

Did it raise the level of GNH,

Or only of GDP?

Did it help to restore or reignite

A sense of community?

Was it born of the local culture?

Did it celebrate local life?

And more important than all of this,

Will it satisfy the wife?

Photos: Cover Samrat Katwal; p3 Yee-Liu Williams,



LOCAL
FUTURES

p4 Alex Jensen, Ashish Kothari; p5 Ohmy news;
p8, 9 Anja Lyngbaek

Local Futures/International Society for Ecology and Culture
www.localfutures.org

USA: PO Box 36, East Hardwick, VT 05836, Tel: 802-472-3505
UK: PO Box 239, Totnes TQ9 9DP, Tel: 01392 581175
info@localfutures.org
