

# PLANET LOCAL: A Quiet Revolution

## film discussion guide

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PLANET LOCAL is about a quiet and transformative revolution emerging worldwide. As people work to protect and restore their local economies, their communities and the natural world, countless diverse initiatives are demonstrating a new path forward for humanity. It's a path that *localizes* rather than globalizes, *connects* rather than separates, and shows us that human beings need not be the problem – *we can be the solution*.

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### first thoughts

The film shows how seemingly disparate issues – from climate breakdown to loss of jobs to mental health epidemics – are actually connected.

● **Do you find this to be an overwhelming message, or an empowering one?**

● **What did you agree with in the film? What didn't you agree with? What surprised you?**

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### human nature

“ *This competitiveness – that you have to prove yourself and push down the others – it's been a deformation of the human spirit, I do believe.* ”

– Joanna Macy

“ *This system has become so vast, so global, that it's almost impossible to see its contours. And no one has been stepping back to look at the big picture. Instead, economic pressures have been demanding ever more specialization – an ever more narrow perspective.* ”

– Helena Norberg-Hodge

● **Reflect on the notion of “human nature” – who are we at a deep level?**

● **The film argues that human nature is not the root cause of the problems we face. Do you agree?**

● **How does the economic system stimulate greed?**

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# going local

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“If we always consume what others produce, we'll always be poor – always slaves.”

– Salim Dara

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“From the time of colonization, there was a historical restructuring of domestic food and agriculture towards sources of cheap raw materials for the industrial needs of the colonizers.”

– Sarojeni Rengam

● **Localization means shifting away from dependence on big corporations, towards strengthening relationships of interdependence at the local level. How do you think such a shift changes the power dynamics of society?**

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“You create together. You meet physical needs for each other. You are embedded, and you could say ‘of’ a place, not just a separate self.”

– Charles Eisenstein

“People want to experience their responsibility. And that means that you carry yourself with pride and dignity. Because you matter.”

– Joanna Macy

● **The film argues that the breakdown of community is a key cause of our worsening social and psychological problems. What are some ways we can bring intergenerational community back into our own lives? What might be the benefits of doing so?**

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“There’s millions of movements around the world who are saying ‘we claim the power where we are; we’re not going to give it to politicians or corporations’.”

– Ashish Kothari

● **Although they are rarely covered by the mainstream media, many grassroots alternatives are emerging. Can you identify any of these localization initiatives in your community or region?**

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“ We have a madness in this world where food that is grown around our cities is largely exported to other areas. Wouldn't it be so much better if the local farmers had the opportunity to work with the local communities to bring their food into the city as was traditionally done? ”

– George Ferguson



**What are some of the benefits of local food systems? Think of benefits to the soil, to community, to human health, and to the local economy.**

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## structural change

“ Beyond these community efforts, localization must advocate for structural changes in the social production relations between farmers, traders and landlords. ”

– Arnold Padilla

“ We need policy reforms that support localization and agroecology ... we need to support and strengthen such a strong people's movement. ”

– Sarojeni Rengam

“ To build [local food] economies, we must recapture our rights from global corporations. ”

– Naomi Klein

“ [Free trade] treaties now even allow corporations to sue governments for any social or environmental protections that might threaten their profits. This makes a mockery of democracy. ”

– Narrator

“ Let's create a fair playing field. Let's stop giving subsidies to big business. Let's get the tax code fair so that local economies have a fair chance to thrive ... If we recognize the various benefits that local businesses bring, I think we'll get very different outcomes. ”

– Stacy Mitchell



**The film argues that structural change to the economy is needed to spread the impact of the important work of grassroots groups. Do you agree? Do you believe changes at this level are possible?**



**In the film, investigative journalist Mika Tsutsumi warns that we must be careful with new technology. What kinds of technologies can we imagine serving a genuine social/ecological purpose in the future? What technologies might have to be challenged?**



# a new economy

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Economist Michael Shuman cites US and Canadian studies showing that small businesses generate more income, create more jobs, and are more profitable than big corporations. Yet most governments continue to believe that deregulating and supporting big business is the path to prosperity.

● **Could reframing the meaning of 'economic growth' help bridge political divides, and bring together people concerned about the environment with those concerned about jobs and financial security?**

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## what can we do?

● **What local initiatives have you personally been involved with? Are there projects that you'd like to start? If so, what are the opportunities and what are the barriers?**

● **What policy shifts at the local, national and international level would make those efforts more likely to succeed?**

● **The film ends with Satish Kumar pointing out how true change must come from the grassroots, citing Martin Luther King Jr. and Mahatma Gandhi as leaders of movements that changed politics from the outside. How can we help to create those kinds of people's movements in today's world?**

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## LOCAL FUTURES' STEPS TO CHANGE:

### I. RECONNECT

Although there are things we can do as individuals, the most important actions are those taken together with others. Change the 'I' to a 'we' by connecting with a group of like-minded others in your community. Ask yourselves the question: what can we do to support our own wellbeing while also contributing to social and planetary healing?



## 2. RETHINK

'Unlearning' the assumptions that have been drilled into us all is essential. In a small group of like-minded others, watch and discuss films, and read books and articles that challenge conventional assumptions around prosperity, progress, sustainability and more.

## 3. RESIST

Connect with wider movements for social and economic change. In particular, join movements that speak out against free trade, corporate rule and globalization.

## 4. RENEW

Rebuild the fabric of community and the local economy in your place. There are so many ways to go about this, each with its own joys and challenges. To find a wide range of renewal actions, check out the **Localization Action Guide** at <https://actionguide.localfutures.org>

## 5. REJOICE

Celebrate your achievements, and spread the joy!

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Watch and share the PLANET LOCAL film online:  
<https://www.localfutures.org/films/planet-local-a-quiet-revolution/>



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