

#7

KOMPASS

A Weltfriedensdienst e.V. Magazine: One Issue, One Topic

BACK TO THE SOURCE

Re-Source

CONTENTS

3 Judith Ohene: Everything is Connected

4-5 In the Beginning there was darkness
Myth by the Kogi

6-8 Hans Jörg Friedrich: Peace to the shacks

9 Guardian of the Earth: Joanna Macy

10-13 Prof. Dr. Ernst Ulrich von Weizsäcker:
What do you actually need?

13-15 Zeddy Chikukwa: I am the land, the air,
the water, the space – I am mother Earth

16-19 Polly Higgins: Making Ecocide a crime!

20-21 Guardian of the Earth: Ulli Westermann

22-23 Resources for Resources

24-25 Helge Swars: Agroecology is more
than organic farming

26-27 Anne Beer: Time to act

28-30 Rob Hopkins: What if ... we made the most
out of having fewer things

30-31 Guardians of the Earth: The Kogi

32-34 Charles Eisenstein: You cannot stay the same when you truly
take in a powerful story

34-35 Anne Beer und Joachim Chr. Wehnelt: Back to the Source, into the Future

35 Anne Baring: A letter from the future

Everything is Connected

Position

The natural resources of our Earth are finite. We have to deal with that, understand the connections, find new approaches – and do so as a global community. Phenomena like climate change, drought and overpopulation affect us all – whether acutely or gradually. What is the heart of the matter, what are the next steps we must take in order to preserve this world? We here at the World Peace Service also ask ourselves these questions. We are well aware that peace is only possible if we live in balance with the earth – we must think ecology and peace together and act accordingly. For this special issue “Re-Source” of the World Peace Service’s Kompass, the editorial team of Anne Beer and Joachim Chr. Wehnelt invited authors to share their view of the present situation of this world, their

ideas and approaches – the sources of their knowledge. What resulted is an inspiring journey. We meet people who passionately advocate the possibility of change, who, each in his or her own manner, question the way things are usually done and transcend familiar borders with their thinking. Prof. Dr von Weizsäcker shares his many years of insight into political action with just as much commitment as Rob Hopkins, founder of the Transition-Town-Movement. We read about the indigenous knowledge of the Kogi and the inhabitants of the mountain village of Chikukwa in Zimbabwe. We get to know people who have a firm and committed relationship with the Earth – in this issue, they are the “Guardians of the Earth”.

The future starts now. We all help shape it and we are all challenged to find inspiration, listen, empathise and act.

Come along on a journey
to the source!

Judith Ohene
Director
Weltfriedensdienst e.V.

"In the beginning there was darkness

There was only the mother - Aluna.
Aluna - an invisible force, hovering above
the primal waters. She was abundance of
the possible, pure thought. The mother
conceived the world in the darkness, she
conceived us as ideas, as you think out a
house before you begin to make it real.
She spun the thread and spinning as all
in the story. "

MYTH BY THE KOGI,
Indeginous people of Columbia

↗ *More about the Kogi on page 30*



PEACE TO THE SHACKS

by Hans Jörg Friedrich

A reflection of practice on the relationship between peace, community and resource justice

Resource conflicts are ever-present and diverse: The examples range from the children's room to international wars. Given a broad understanding of the concept of "resources", one is tempted to classify nearly every conflict as a resource conflict. Do the mission statement and practises of the World Peace Service reveal a guiding approach to resource conflicts that can serve as a compass in the midst of this diversity of forms? One that is general enough to offer orientation in analysis and the daily routine of projects, but also more tangible than the ironic motto of the Frankfurt school of satire: "For good, and against evil"?

Let's take a closer look: A **"conflict"** exists when the interests, objectives or values of participants are, or appear to be, irreconcilable with each other. This does not necessarily have to be resolved through violence and can also be viewed positively as a motor of social change. Nevertheless, the adjective "irreconcilable" does indicate the potential for violence inherent in untransformed conflicts. In the context of development and economic policy, **"resource"** is used as a synonym for a raw material or natural resource. Resources are commonly understood to be parts of the natural environment that can be utilised eco-

nomically or technologically. Speaking of resource conflicts in this sense gives rise to an image of conflicting acquisition interests. Frequently, however, for one of the parties it is not just about a natural resource that can be industrially isolated and is of strictly economic interest, but about a sustainably structured ensemble, about earth, nature, history, beauty, homeland and spirituality.

Resources cannot simply be distributed

Even where there is apparent rivalry about practical use of the same resource – take fertile soil or water, for example – one side may regard this strictly as a production factor, while the other views it as an integral part of a whole, so that it must be used in a different manner. Last but not least, resources are entirely different to natural resources in other fields relevant to development policy, for example, education or psychology.

Thus there are plausible reasons for a broad definition of "resource", lest we already import the point of view of specific parties to the conflict. One possible way is suggested by the linguistic

origin of the Latin verb *resurgere* – to rise. Accordingly, a resource would be something that props us up. This is human-centered, but leaves unresolved what it consists of, whether it comes from within or without, whether it is physically consumed or only experienced – it defines itself through its effect. This, in turn, can be understood materially or also spiritually. The motif of straightening up is reminiscent of the potential self-realisation of Johan Galtung, which is thwarted by structural violence.

Thus when viewed in this way, resource conflicts would be irreconcilable or seemingly irreconcilable interests, goals or values of different participants regarding something that can strengthen them. They may be open or hidden – the problems of virtual water, for example (see *Kompass* #3), are something of which analysts are more aware than the parties themselves. Moreover, conflicts can be settled through physical and/or structural violence, and they can be examined for endogenous and exogenous and resource-specific and resource-independent factors of influence, as described by Matthias Basedau¹. What follows from this? **A peace and development organisation like the World Peace Service, which sees itself as siding with**

the weak, could support non-violent conflict transformation for resource justice and thus campaign against both physical and structural violence.

Admittedly, the guiding principle of “justice” does not answer all questions.

Values cannot be short-circuited to social realities with such generality. Among the materially impoverished neighbours of an Andean salt flat with lithium deposits, it is uncertain whether justice consists of a guarantee of jobs and profit sharing or in the preservation of the landscape that offers sustainable, cooperative salt production and aesthetic and spiritual sources of strength. And what algorithm will tell us how half a hectare of permanent crops in Burundi should be divided between the two widows of a murdered small farmer and the previous owners who were expelled long ago?

To permit an appropriate response to such situations, the concept of resource justice must be capable of resonating with varying needs. Two fundamental concerns can be distinguished: Firstly, in everyday terms, “justice” refers to balance. This type of thinking can be traced back to the beginnings of written culture and later leads to mathematical/ logical mental models which not only permit the fair division of scarce physical goods among competitors, but are also intended to help clarify their social preconditions.

An entirely different tradition of thought connects “justice” with a holistic state that defies formal precision.

In Christianity, it is the attribute of God. Thus within human reality, that which is “just” is that “which is pleasing to God”. This opens up realms of interpretation and authority for priestly castes, but it can also be understood as a warning against subjective short circuits: A commitment to justice is frequently

just a hair’s breadth removed from an ego trip. Self-appointed warriors for justice apply their personal favourite criterion (money, property, opportunity, needs, recognition etc.) to contradictory situations and ignore all the other legitimate points of view. But this clarity cannot be brought about by force. For Jacques Derridaⁱⁱ, justice – i.e., an order

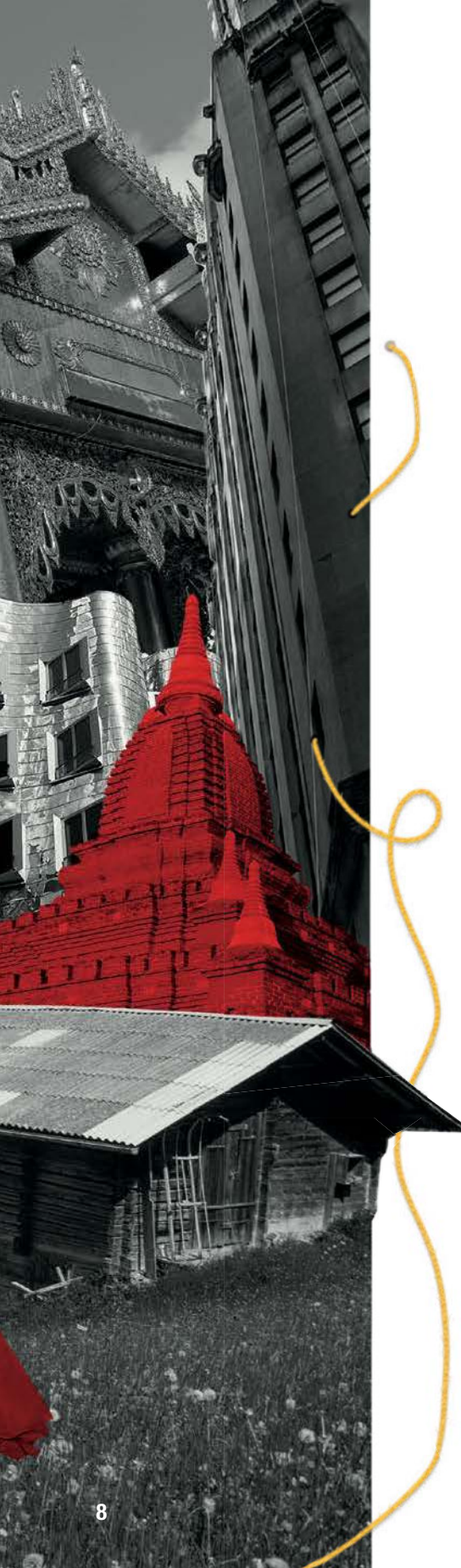
Resources always have a context and are fraught with meaning for local people

in which things that are equal are also treated equally – cannot be derived from anything. It is a kind of primal impulse that motivates the regulatory power and is inherent in legal practise, but can never be implemented satisfactorily in positive law. **The universal aspect of the law never “does justice” to a special, individual case.**

There are indications of both perspectives, the formal/logical one and the holistic one, in the cooperation projects of the World Peace Service. The disputes revolve around land use, salt deposits, wild fruits, wood, river water or groundwater, all of which could seem destined for predictable compromises. But as resources also always have a context and are fraught with meaning for local people, they cannot simply be distributed. With this in mind, for example, our partners in Argentina or Senegal are campaigning alongside farmers for community-oriented land laws.

So if we arrive at open definitions of resources and justice, it is a matter of finding spaces in which – to refer back





to the foregoing examples - the widows and the refugee family can interact in a solution-oriented manner and the Andean communities can reconcile material, cultural and spiritual concerns. Such spaces

- must be devoid of major power gaps and similar imbalances,
- permit only a manageable number of participants so they can give rise to constructive discussions,
- are close to the social environment in which people live, love and die, where body and soul are present and basic needs can be experienced. (This experiential dimension is important because local specifics are no longer dismissed as a corrective in strongly generalised, predominantly self-referential professional discourses.)

One could call such negotiating spaces “communities”. Not in the sense of a real definition – what is meant by this term in everyday usage are settlement areas or virtual communities that are riddled with conversational blockades and bridgeheads of powerful interests. But rather as a nominal definition – an idea of what we are searching for or want to create. This does not exactly coincide with what, upon initial contact, appears to be an empirical “community”. Instead, project partners, consultants and professionals must shape the contact with the potential beneficiaries in such a way that a modest variation of “non-hierarchical discourse” becomes possible, e.g., so that minorities can also exert an influence. Supported development plans of indigenous villages, but also mediation processes involving numerous participants or the collaborative work on causes of

conflict processes are examples of such discussions. These result in – locally and thematically limited – variants of resource justice. Social forces that can no longer be integrated in this primary exchange – remote governments, local large-scale industrialists, supply chains, warlords – cannot be included at this point, but it is thoroughly possible to integrate them within the scope of multi-player partnerships or as target groups of political lobbying.

Peace workers are “sweepers”

In this sense, peace work helps the communities to develop their specific vision of resource justice and realise it as far as possible. This process can be supported through empowerment, participatory methods and organisational development. Practical initiatives based on this can be promoted through grass-roots technical consulting. If political conditions are to be changed at priority points, this requires the interaction of community-based organisations like the World Peace Service - not as a one-way street of information collection, but as continuous coordination to exert an influence on the suitable points of leverage as they arise: bottom-up advocacy. Peace workers are the sweepers, the roving centre-backs in this process.

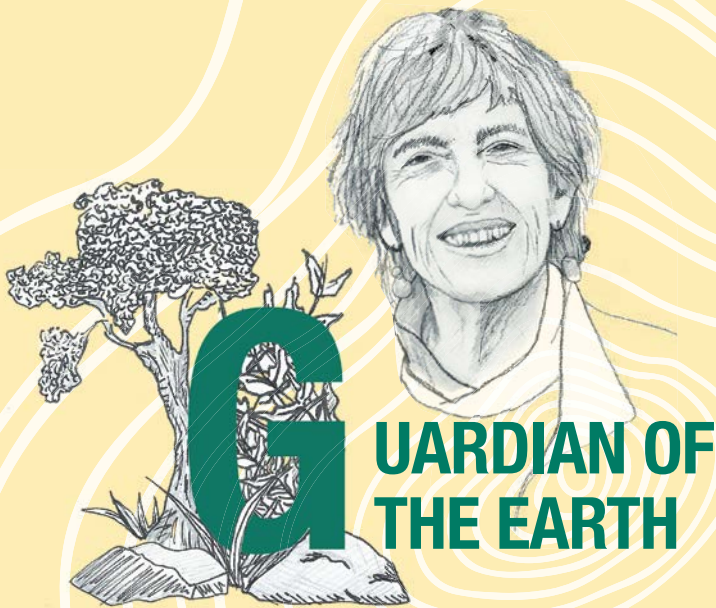


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German Development Institute (DIE) and a systemic consultant.

ⁱ www.wissenschaft-und-frieden.de_seite.php_artikelID=153

ⁱⁱ ‘Mystical Foundation of Authority’, Ffm 1991, bewegungsdiskurs.de/texte/gsr/Derrida-ak-2000.rtf



If we want to preserve the Earth as a living diverse system, we need people who are actively involved in change without being discouraged and who are strengthening the self-healing power of the Earth on different levels: politically, structurally and individually.

This kind of change and the pursuit of it is the core of the deep ecological work that Joanna Macy founded and shaped. “The Work that Reconnects” strengthens our solidarity with the Earth, with ourselves and others. It promotes confidence and encourages action.

METHODICAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHANGE

Over the years, Joanna Macy has created a profound framework for personal and social change, as well as a powerful workshop methodology for its application.

In the face of overwhelming social and ecological crises, this work helps people to feel and transform despair and apathy into constructive, collaborative action. It is a form of group work designed to foster the desire and ability to take part in the healing of our world.

“Of all the dangers we face – from climate chaos to nuclear war – none is as great as the deadening of our ability to respond.”

Joanna Macy

The approach consists of four stages, following a spiral through a cyclical process; beginning with Gratitude, then Honouring Our Pain for the World, Seeing with Fresh Eyes, and finally, Going Forth. During this process, the ability to commit oneself to life is further developed. Each time through the Spiral we become more aware of new and deeper meanings.

The first stage focuses on “Gratitude”, practising and focusing on what strengthens and nourishes us and serves as a basis for our actions. Then we face our pain around the world and what is happening around us. In this process, we open up the unsaid, the not-felt, and let ourselves touch it. The “Honouring Our Pain for the World” shows that we share life, that we are connected and do not demarcate ourselves from environmental destruction. Conceptually anchored in systems theory, this path leads us back to our cultural systems, norms and values.

Everyone who went through this process and supported others in going through these stages will be encouraged to “Seeing with Fresh Eyes”; to see that oneself is more than part of the whole and most of all, to see the abundance of resources for change. We enter into a creative process that leads us into acting, the “Going Further” by developing a clear vision of how we can contribute to change and healing of the world.

RECOGNISING AND USING RESOURCES

Since its inception in the late 1970s, it has helped thousands of people around the globe to find solidarity and courage to act despite rapidly worsening social and ecological conditions. This approach is also known as Deep Ecology.

By Constance Washburne & Anne Beer

“Active Hope means waking up to the beauty of life on whose behalf we can act. We Belong to this World.”

Joanna Macy

Joanna Macy PH.D is an author & teacher, a scholar of Buddhism, systems thinking and deep ecology. She turns 90 this year with over six decades of peace, justice, and environmental activism.

She is a true Earth Guardian.

INTERVIEW WITH
PROF. DR. ERNST ULRICH VON WEIZSÄCKER



“WHAT DO YOU ACTUALLY NEED?”

It's down to us, says Prof. Dr. **Ernst Ulrich von Weizsäcker**. The long-term co-president of the Club of Rome, a worldwide union of scientists and economists, calls for a controlled balance between resources and markets.

Kompass: Prof. Dr von Weizsäcker, massive floods, extreme heat waves, a shortage of resources and the climate is changing – in the 21st century, the earth has come unbalanced. How did we wind up here?

Prof. Dr von Weizsäcker: A study of Earth's ground-dwelling vertebrates offers some insight in this regard. The vertebrates were divided into three categories: First, human beings; second, domestic animals – primarily animals for slaughter – and third, wild animals.

The shocking empirical result is that human beings account for 30% of the live mass of the vertebrates, domestic animals account for 67% because we eat a great deal of meat, and that leaves just 3% for wild animals. That is an absolutely grotesque imbalance. Given the current trend, this would worsen dramatically again by 2030, based on a statement frequently repeated by development economists: In the past fifteen years, an additional one billion people

have made the leap into the social middle class and consequently want to eat much more meat.

Kompass: What's more, humanity is increasing constantly. Fifty years ago, Earth's population was 2.5 billion people, today it is 7.5 billion. How can we deal with all this?

Weizsäcker: Essentially, there are two strategies for this: one is efficiency and the other is sufficiency. Efficiency means we are supposed to conjure up double, four times, eight times as much

prosperity as we do today from a square metre of ground or a hectolitre of water; this is especially important when it comes to energy because energy cannot be cycled. Then technical advances are important, for example, the LED, which delivers about 10 times as much light per KWH as the old light bulb did. Analogous to this is the passive or plus energy house, which promises to boost efficiency by a factor of ten. In agriculture, this would mean a return from highly energy-intensive, large-scale livestock farming to grazing stock, albeit with a far lower meat yield. The situation is analogous where water is concerned; with the latest type of drip irrigation, as developed in Australia, it is also possible to reduce the amount of water needed for sufficient crop irrigation by a factor of four. Today, agriculture is by far the biggest devourer of water worldwide, and water is still mainly subsidised although we have a severe shortage of water worldwide. In part, this can be overcome to a great extent by technical means. All this means a fivefold increase in resource productivity.

Kompass: You are also calling for sufficiency!

Weizsäcker: We need a sense of frugality. Jetting off to Tenerife for the weekend on a whim is a kind of consumption that has absolutely nothing to do with a high quality of life, let alone the necessities of survival. It is a different form of gluttony.

Kompass: How must we change?

Weizsäcker: We can indeed limit luxury consumption. Of course, that also entails a certain limitation of air traffic, for example, rescinding the absolutely atavistic Chicago Convention of 1944, which exempts international aviation fuel from taxation. That is absolutely grotesque. This agreement was reached in the age of Charles Lindbergh - when

there were just a few pioneers. It was, so to speak, an agreement to promote a desired technical advance. I intend no offence to the people of 1944, but in the age of mass air tourism, that is a simple distortion of the thoroughly normal logic of taxation and consumption tax - that needs to be rescinded right away!

You need a sense of contentment

Then budget airlines would no longer beat railways on price - as is grotesquely the case today. I would look on this not as a limitation of quality of life, but instead deskewing prices so that they are fair.

Kompass: This skewing of prices also exists with many other resources.

Weizsäcker: Here, again, I begin with the political aspect. On the whole, over the past 200 years, energy - primary raw materials and drinking water - has tended to become less expensive and not more expensive, as everyone assumes, despite rapid consumption of geological reserves! Simply because shipping, refining, and marketing were subject to a huge advance in technology. So in this case, too, that means: If we want rational price relations, then we must actively make energy and water more expensive - because the markets are unable to get it right. As leader of a corresponding working group in the Chinese government's so-called "China Council", I proposed taxing energy, raw materials and water in China by the same percentage as the increase in efficiency in the previous year, so that,

on average, people do not spend more on energy services in the subsequent year than they did before. That would be a socially and economically acceptable formula which, however, would of course exert an immense influence on the behaviour of investors - they would say: Oh God, now this is going to get more expensive every year, we urgently need to invest finally in dormant energy efficiency.

Kompass: At the moment, there is rather more investment in mass production ...

Weizsäcker: ... with the consequence of a throwaway society. This would then slowly disappear simply because it would be rational, for example, to return raw materials to circulation again after use of the respective commodity. Today this is not at all the case.

Kompass: It was recently revealed that Germans have the highest plastic consumption because we believe we have a recycling system that is unique in the entire world.

Weizsäcker: Yes, that just came out - we are, in a sense, the world champions in recycling and one of the greatest consumers of natural resources because firstly, this recycling of plastic is pretty shabby: The result is far from the original quality; only 15% of the used plastic can be reused as raw material. The rest is simply incinerated, unless it is just shifted to Africa and Asia in the form of cheap products and thence to the world's oceans. Making plastic from oil is just incredibly inexpensive; more and more oil is being transformed into plastic, namely the cheapest sort of plastic. If, however, oil slowly becomes more expensive, then industry will ensure that the intrinsic value of the plastic increases from year to year. Then all at once recycling really makes sense, unlike today.

Kompass: Resource justice, in other words, the lack of balance between nations and con-

tinents, is an important topic when it comes to peace building. How can we establish justice?

Weizsäcker: This was already set forth ten years ago by the scientific advisory board "Global Environmental Changes". We need the so-called "budget approach" to fossil fuels for climate protection, which means: Over the course of history, every country has an equal right to use the atmosphere. The old industrialised nations that have been at it for 150 years have largely already expended their atmosphere use budget. If now we had to go shopping in developing nations to buy licences, for example, for this idiotic cotton production, then RWE would immediately stop doing it because it would no longer be profitable. Then all of a sudden renewable energy and energy efficiency would be important and experience a real boom. Then investors would adapt accordingly. Simultaneously, and this is the elegant part, overnight there would be a sudden turnaround in the developing world: From the current situation, in which a new coal-fired power station is a licence to print money, to a situation in which it is more lucrative to not build a planned coal-fired power station, but shape the transition to renewable energy instead. Renewable energy is especially interesting for developing nations in order to accelerate energy efficiency and sell the allotted licences to the foolish Europeans and Americans. Today, 90 of 100 coal-fired power stations under construction are in the developing world, which means that we Europeans have zero chance of climate stabilisation if we only bring the northern countries around to the idea – we also have to get the developing countries on board. Only today, climate pollution is a money printing machine and so no developing country

can be expected to refrain from it. Thus, we have to ensure that there it becomes more lucrative to do the right thing instead of the wrong thing.

Kompass: How could this be implemented politically?

Weizsäcker: This could work by imposing political quotas. At last year's Copenhagen Climate Conference, one year after presentation of this approach,

In a sense,
we are
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and the
greatest natural
consumers

Dr Merkel introduced this idea of the budget approach to the climate talks. However, the Americans more or less automatically said: No, not on our watch, "it is not in the American interest and it is contrary to the American way of life."

Kompass: In the new report to the Club of Rome entitled "Come On!", of which you were a co-author, you call for a new Enlightenment. What would that look like?

Weizsäcker: We are relatively subversive in that regard. Firstly, the task of a new Enlightenment is to perceive the ways in which the historical Enlightenment went wrong. After all, the enlightened Europeans decided they had the right to lord it over the people of Africa.

Kompass: You also call for a new balance in dealing with resources at all levels.

Weizsäcker: Precisely, for example, be-

tween market and state. In the English-speaking world, we see a massive contempt for the state and a quasi-religious belief that the market is, by definition according to natural law, superior to the state. Today, however, law is national and the market is global – and thereby ruthless and lawless. Raising awareness of this is also part of the new Enlightenment. So is a reasonable balance between state and religion. Nobody wants an Islamic state or a Christian state before Luther. Nevertheless, a state that despises, forbids or oppresses religion is also idiotic. We need a balance. Also between justice and achievement incentives. That is the constant quarrel between the left and the right in politics: The left wants justice; the right wants performance incentives. But both are correct. It's a matter of striking a reasonable balance.

Elements like these would constitute a new Enlightenment. As a process, however, it may take thirty years, as it did in the decades following Immanuel Kant. We don't claim to have the right answers, but for now we have the right questions.

Kompass: How can we help at the community level? Many NGOs are already working on the topic of peace and resources. What opportunities and challenges do you see for NGOs with regard to how they should position themselves or the direction in which they should aim their endeavours?

Weizsäcker: I know from talks with developing countries from the NGO scene that governmental development aid is always coupled to the consent of the partner country. Moreover, the partner country is frequently corrupt and egotistical, without much regard for the welfare of the population.

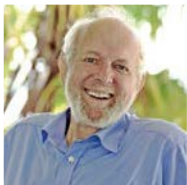
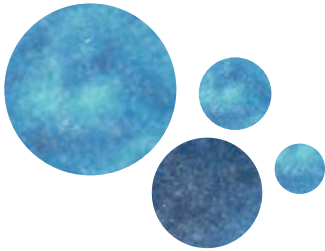
Therein lies a real limitation of German, European and worldwide development aid. You are always bound to

the countries.

The German NGOs can deal much more informally with the NGOs from the developing countries or the local authorities in those countries and ask them: What do you really need? That may result in responses that are quite different to those from the central government.

Kompass: Dr von Weizsäcker, thank you very much for this conversation.

Interview: Joachim Chr. Wehnelt



The physicist Prof. Dr. Ernst Ulrich von Weizsäcker was Co-Präsident of the Club of Rome between 2012 and 2018. As honorary member

of the World Future Council he recently published the resource book "Come On! Capitalism, Short-termism, Population and the Destruction of the Planet". He celebrates his 80th birthday this year.

I am the land, the air, the water, the space – I am mother Earth.

by **Zeddy Chikukwa**



Most mind-blowing teachings come from observing and listening to nature. The view towards our **RESOURCES** would be better understood if one first considers the traditions from which they are largely evolved and borrowed. This is how we thrived after a strong decline.

C

hikukwa is situated in Zimbabwe's Eastern Highlands on the Mozambique border of Manicaland Province. Manicaland was particularly exposed to cross-border militia activity, with ambushes and violence due to its proximity to the civil war in Mozambique. While these events remain important to Chikukwans, they are peripheral to their long struggle to recapture alienated land, which continues to

shape the community's strong sense of identity – at the heart of which lies the royal family of the Ungweme clan. The Chikukwa community, especially the elders, have an environmental conservation model of their own that constitutes the Indigenous Knowledge System [IKS], including weather forecasting. We are conscious of and knowledgeable about our environment to the extent that some can manipulate natural weather patterns like lightning and thunder for benevolent and malevolent purposes through rituals and practices.

One ritual was done last year around the end of February and beginning of March 2017 after there was an outbreak of army worms in most fields in the Chikukwa community. Farmers began to spray the worms but no positive results came from the spraying. It was such a community concern that, at a gathering, people agreed to engage the elderly women in performing the traditional ritual to communicate this to the spiritual world. As they sang special songs, they walked early in the morning, picking up the worms from the fields. These rituals are only done by women who are in menopause. They took these worms in a calabash to the elderly father of the Chikukwa clan, who then went into a sacred hut [Ngome] to carry on the rituals. The community elderly women being led by the elderly aunt of the clan to the worm pool [dziya remvimvani] took the worms there. The following morning none of these worms were found in any of the fields of the farmers. People rejoiced as they sang songs of praise to the guidance of the nature spirits. In our traditional context, the use, management and conservation of natural resources emanate from peoples' spirituality, culture, practices, taboo systems and knowledge accrued since time beyond reckoning. Despite the existing influence of colonization and globalization, by and large we still cling to some of our values, which include love and respect for nature. As part of our spirituality, we still have strong beliefs in the supernatural in relation to the surrounding environment.

We follow certain practices like when you first settle at any piece of land you do a Mataapano ceremony, meaning to inform the existing spiritual beings that you will be staying in harmony with them. The various practices guard against an unsustainable use of resources which include certain plant species, forest, mountains, rivers, pools, and non-human species. Through taboos, the endangered species, nutritional and medicinal plants as well as water sources are protected. The use of natural

resources goes beyond instant needs as they form part of the strategies for conservation and celebration of culture and human life. As this is of high value, I also acknowledge developments coming from the global North. I like the system of de-growth in the North as there is the realization of the impact of massive production as opposed to the world

The focus on more
and more
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our planet

carrying capacity considering the resources we have as a planet at large. There are a lot of good things from the north especially the fight against hunger and poverty and cross-pollination of ideas from both the north and south.

The vitality of our religious and cultural systems enhances the link between available resources and entities such as Mwari [God], Vadzimu [ancestors], Masvikiro [spirit mediums]. These are guardians of the land as well as its natural resources. The rules and regulations that guide the use of natural resources are done through spiritual considerations and customary law. This results in collective responsibility to preserve resources that are preserved for posterity. There is the concept of sacred space or places and species that are of spiritual significance and the environment at the same time. Therefore animals, rivers, forests, mountains, and other natural landscape are regarded as sacred. Respect for ancestral spirits contributes to biodiversity conservation, showing



"My life is a gift to God. How I use my time, is my gift back."

Zeddy Chikukwa works as a Community Development Field Officer at Chikukwa Ecological Land Use Trust in Chikukwa.

that the Chikukwa community has indigenous ways of living in harmony with nature. Nature and society are inseparable. We as a community believe in a natural, organic way of life. Our diet is simple but healthy, consisting of locally produced carbohydrates, vitamins, proteins and fats. Our ancestors are integrated in our daily life through traditional clapping and ululating once there is a community gathering; we encourage one another to produce healthy food on healthy land. Living naturally implies producing

Nature and human society
are inextricably linked

ones' own food, eating a diet consisting of organic foods as well as upholding the sacredness of the earth by refusing to pollute and commercialize it.

CHIKUKWA

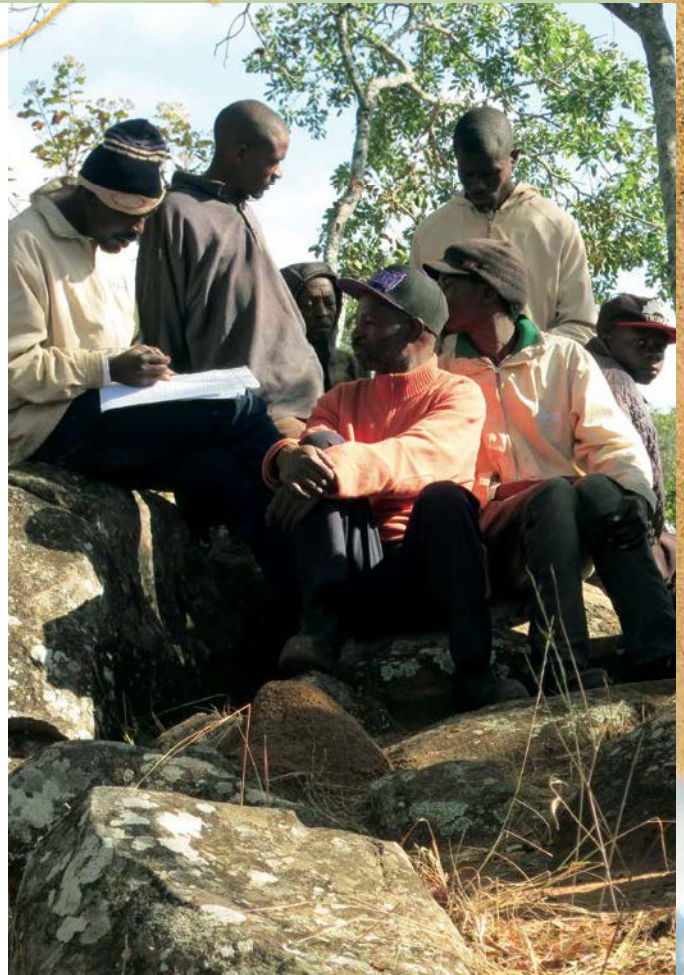
A success story from Africa

The Chikukwa community has a long-established permaculture initiative firmly embedded since 1991.

Chikukwa Territory consists of two countries, namely Zimbabwe and Mozambique. It is one of the world Key Biodiversity Areas [KBA] being a habitat of some endemic species of flora and fauna. 'Migrant' farmers have instead come to settle from Mozambique and other parts of Zimbabwe, resulting in emerging land-use and access tensions within the society.

The Chikukwa Ecological Land Use Trust (CELUCT), a Community Based Organization [CBO] in the framework of the WFD-ZFD cooperation, has also played an important role in the community identity of the Chimanimani region and its growing sense of confidence in its ability to self-mobilize in response to the rapid social and ecological changes taking place. CELUCT has sought a social-ecological re-linking especially for teenagers to address challenges resulting from population pressures, such as deforestation, erosion and extreme food insecurity. CELUCT develops local concepts for psycho-social and trauma work and works together with local volunteer peace committees in the communities.

↗ weltfriedensdienst.de/thema/kampf-gegen-politisch-motivierte-gewalt-in-simbabwe



MAKING ECOCIDE A CRIME

by Polly Higgins



Ecocide —the destruction of the earth— often occurs during peacetime; it can lead to conflict (over resource exploitation) and ultimately can lead to war. By making ecocide a crime, dangerous industrial activity can no longer operate; thus, a choice must be faced: either change or be held to account in a criminal court of law.

12 years ago I was in London, in the Royal Courts of Justice, in one of the top courtrooms in the building. I had made my case as a lawyer, now I was waiting for the judges to come back with judgment, and I found myself looking out of the window. In my mind's eye, I traveled out across Lincoln's Inn Fields, across the trees and the houses and across London, right across to the Amazon, to the Athabasca Tar Sands in Canada, and I could see that the Earth was being badly injured and harmed, and I found myself thinking: the Earth is in need of a good lawyer.

It was a thought that very quickly distilled itself into a very clear question. How do we create a legal duty of care for the Earth? Hearing the question was the beginning of my quest. And a quest inevitably always begins with a question.

It is about understanding the duty of care

The Earth in its totality is our home and when we destroy the lands, pollute the waters and seas, and contaminate

the atmosphere, our well-being and peace are lost - not just for humanity, but for all beings. What is often underestimated is how important it is that we take care of our home and all beings who live here, for in the absence of which we shall never attain peace. This is really about understanding the legal concept of Duty of Care. You could say it's a collective responsibility to perceive ourselves as guardians of the Earth in response to the current global ecological and climate crisis. Ecocide can be tangible, such as the land-grabs of massive resource extraction which is polluting and destroying the Earth. But it also it can be less tangible, such as the escalation of greenhouse gases. The question is whether or not ecocide amounts to an atrocity crime –and therefore should be added as a stand-alone crime beside genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity. These existing atrocity crimes were enacted as international crimes and are referred to as 'the crimes of most serious concern to humanity as a whole.' Atrocity crimes mostly occur during wartime or times of conflict. Ecocide, however, mostly occurs during

peace-time. It is a peacetime crime that can lead to war or conflict over diminishing resources which in turn leads to the escalation of even more ecocide, often in tandem with crimes against humanity and genocide. This is a cycle of escalating harm on a scale that is barely comprehensible.

There is a culture of impunity for dangerous industrial practices

The legitimacy of corporate activity has resulted in a culture of impunity. What we are experiencing is an escalation of the cycle of ecocide during peacetime. It is licensed; governments give companies permits to operate, environmental impact assessments are often silent on the significant adverse consequences of say fossil fuel extraction in terms of significant ecological and climate impact. Thus, through our laws, such dangerous industrial activities have been normalized.

My team and I receive emails weekly from individuals all over the world that are facing the adverse impacts of commercial ecocide. Sometimes it is their land that is being destroyed

through extractive industries, or for instance, due to industrialized agriculture practices. Small communities are suddenly faced with the threat of their land being destroyed, from lawful industrialized practices. For others living on the frontline of climate collapse, it is rising sea-levels, increasing intensity and frequency of cyclones – an existential humanitarian crisis on an enormous scale.

And yet, climate negotiations are silent on the potential criminality of State and corporate activity. With climate crime, what has to be established is whether there is a dereliction of a legal Duty of Care as well as a missing State responsibility to protect the public from dangerous industrial activity and its consequences. Hurricanes will not wait whilst we endlessly vacillate over unenforceable pledges.

Thus, at this year's Assembly to the International Criminal Court, in the Hague, we launched an independent Preliminary Examination into climate crime. As with all case files, suspects must be named. Our principal suspects are the two CEO's of one of the largest carbon-intensive investor-owned companies in the world: Shell. We have also named the Climate Minister of the Netherlands as a third suspect, in order to examine whether there is also a missing political responsibility to protect. The fact that ecocide occurs during peacetime does not make it any less of an atrocity, or any less of a crime. We live in an age where the consequences of dangerous industrial activity are long-term, transboundary and can be felt on the other side of the world. The examination shall scrutinize evidence suggesting that Shell knew that significant adverse impacts arise



from their activities. Crucially, evidence has come to light to suggest that the public has been misled over a lengthy period of 30+ years, and such evidence could amount to a crime.

Ecocide should get the rank of war crimes

Our findings will be subject to the same stringent conditions and rigorous scrutiny as required by official ICC procedures and we shall be scrutinizing evidence suggesting that Shell, one of the largest oil companies in the world, knew that significant adverse climatic impacts arise from their activities. The purpose of our independent climate ecocide examination is to determine whether there is sufficient evidence both to establish a crime of ecocide and to justify its adoption as an atrocity crime alongside genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and crimes of aggression. Ultimately it is up to any one of the 123 Signatory Heads of States to advance ecocide crime as an urgent amendment to the Rome Statute.

This is about flipping a normative – and flipping it very fast. Once dangerous industrial activity is held to account in a criminal court of law, it's illegality then becomes the new normative. You could say that ecocide law imputes a legal Duty of Care for people and planet by establishing a legal responsibility to protect the Earth.

The countries that are most likely to support ecocide as a crime are those who are most adversely impacted by climate ecocide. Through rising sea levels and tsunamis floods these countries are on the front line; known as small island developing States, the

tiny dots across the Equator, they are in reality the Great Ocean States. They require ecocide to be recognized as a crime, to prohibit the sources of climate breakdown. However, to take this law forward into the international criminal court is an enormous financial challenge, and with every cyclone immediate survival needs kick in, rehousing people, providing emergency provisions etc, which inevitably puts them under enormous financial strain and precludes them from the cost of delegate attendance at the International Criminal Court meetings.



Seal of the International Criminal Court (ICC)
in The Hague

So to support them, we've launched our campaign Mission Lifeorce (<https://www.missionlifeorce.org>) – a legally pegged crowdfunder where you can sign up as an Earth protector to help fund their costs of advancing ecocide crime. Society at large, those who consider themselves to be Earth protectors, can finance the smallest countries in the world to take climate crime into the international criminal court. Civil society has a critical role here – to help fund the States that most require a law to protect the

Earth. So please do come on board as an Earth protector.

This is one law that really can make a difference – if we so choose. Without it, our Earth continues to be destroyed. Some children, I have found, see the simplicity in this. Children don't look for a mandate to say "is this is wrong?" Often children are aligned with their intrinsic values. They recognize what is a harmful activity and say so - it doesn't require a bunch of scientists to tell a six-year-old that fracking or oil extraction is wrong.

And here's the thing, we each have a mandate. We do not have to wait to be told it is okay to stand up and speak out. We have a moral and collective mandate to protect and to take care of the Earth. It's our Earth – our global home. How we choose to look after and protect our home is up to us.

Any company can be part of the problem – or the solution

Once in place as an international crime, the company has a choice in law: continue with an ecocidal activity and be held to account in a criminal court of law, or not. Every company in the world can be part of the problem – or, part of the solution. That is the choice. The crime of ecocide simply imposes a legal duty of care and a responsibility to protect. Atrocity crimes are not only there to prohibit, they are there to act as a deterrent as well, and in the case of ecocide ensure that the senior officials who do not comply are prosecuted in a criminal court of law.

How we treat ourselves and others matters. This is about self-care as well as community and Earth care. The same principles apply.

You may ask: what is it that has created this disharmony? What is it that has to be restored within us? If we can do that, we become better at feeling – and when we become better at feeling, we have greater clarity of what it is that causes serious harm. I do believe there is a correlation here. If we are in a state of confusion we cannot discern what is occurring. Worse, if we cannot feel, we cannot discern at all whether something is causing harm. I say that because for those who make decisions with the knowledge that it shall cause ecocide are unable to experience the felt

We each
have
a to act

expression of what it is to suffer from the trauma of land being destroyed, communities ripped asunder from climate breakdown and the pain of forced homelessness. If we can feel it, then to remain complicit becomes untenable. This is a justice, issue, about recognizing that serious ecological and climate breakdown must stop. We did it with genocide. We got to the point and said 'no more' to apartheid. Now in the 21st century, the missing crime we face is ecocide.

What is ecocide?

Ecocide is a missing crime often occurs during peacetime; it can lead to conflict (over resource exploitation) and ultimately can lead to war. It also can intensify climate breakdown, in particular where the dangerous industrial activity is carbon-intensive; the largest contributors are the fossil fuel industry. Without ecocide crime, State sanctioned resource exploitation remains legitimate – a lawful activity.

Polly Higgins

Our author Polly Higgins died in April 2019. She wrote the text based on an interview she had conducted with the makers of the Kompass. It turns out that her message here is her legacy.

The Scottish barrister wrote the book "Eradicating Ecocide" and dedicated her life to fighting against ecocide. She also started the Earth Protectors fundraising group.

Find out here how you can contribute to make her vision real.

Polly's work and legacy is being continued by her growing team based in the UK, the Netherlands and internationally. ↗ stopecocide.earth

To learn more about the preliminary examination of ecocide at the ICC: ↗ earth-law.org/climatecrime

To understand more about the legal background of ecocide:
↗ eradicatingecocide.com.





GUARDIAN OF THE EARTH

Me, a guardian?

In Eastern Zimbabwe, we are the ones who are guarded – by the Earth, by the people who dwell here. This is why I live here.

BACK THEN, THE EARTH WAS NOT MY CONCERN

Back then, I also wasn't primarily concerned with guarding anything. "Back then" was 1982, when the wall was still very much a reality in Germany and ecology was almost a foreign word.

We had to get out of there, shake off the stench of a thousand years, overcome the collective inheritance of fascism and try something new. Homeland? Adventure!

We wanted freedom for ourselves and others, especially where people were being marginalised – for example, by apartheid systems in southern Africa. As far away as possible from what was familiar: To

Zimbabwe, with the people, in the country, in a small village.

To establish something, from the grassroots up, through perseverance and forbearance.

There the Earth guarded us: With the clay from which the walls and floors of our hut were made and with the humus which brought forth a few vegetables for us. Feeling and working the Earth, battling our way through muddy streets, living on and from the land – all this served to put down roots in a new culture which, compared to the culture which I thought I had left behind me, could not have been more alien.

The novella 'A Son of the Soil' by Wilson Katiyo was required reading for the Cambridge syllabus in the late eighties and pointed the way for many. In it, the protagonist Alexio in racist Rhodesia abandons his pur-

suit of education in favour of the struggle for freedom for Zimbabwe. I had brought along some ideology in my baggage from Germany which clicked nicely with that.

It was also all about multicultural change: Being part of the change towards decolonisation, human rights, democracy, equal opportunity and justice. Resource justice! Land, water, learning, education with production. Taking responsibility for it together. An end to isolation and alienation. That is how much hope Zimbabwe held in the eighties.

Everyone gathers
around the table and
spread out
the maps!
Still there was hope

But the pattern of unequal development was still at work: Old and new elites established themselves on the backs of a growing population. Traditional respect for plants, animals and the Earth soon capitulated under the pressure of a constantly growing hunger for raw materials and modern patterns of consumption. Structural adjustments demanded their tribute. An increasingly authoritarian kleptocracy bled the country dry. The fast-track land reform at the beginning of the new millennium was not accompanied by consultation or infrastructure development, let alone sustainable planning and practise. On the whole, the Earth was treated badly by the many impoverished people who were intended to subsist on their land, under the conditions of conflict, migration, economic decline and a society re-building itself. It seemed that new technical solutions were required. Permaculture and agrarian ecology were also applicable on a small scale. The various elements and their functions in the living system Earth – soil, plants, physical structures, animals and people – thereby interacted productively and fluidly. Now communities of small farmers were able to farm their land more sustainably – and the results were quickly and clearly apparent.

Now I was more concerned about the Earth
With all of its complicated relationships in the ground, in rural society, between south and north, east and west. Promoting sustainable connections between economy and ecology in the field of tension between rights and interests. In the midst of

the newly broached challenges of climate change, seeking a balanced playing field between the public and private sectors, civil society and indigenous communities. Everyone gathered around the table and spread out the maps! Still there was hope.

That became my profession with the World Peace Service. It gave me material security and protected me. It also changed the way I did things day to day. I drove all around the district in a project vehicle and had to spend a lot of time at a desk, deal with the Internet and financial accounts, and fly back and forth between Africa and Europe frequently. It would take more than dairy goats and gardening for me to survive in 21st century Zimbabwe.

But the trees planted 20 or 30 years ago are still bearing a lot of fruit and providing a lot of shade. In many ways, our decision to remain in this corner on the border to Mozambique is paying off now. We are guarded here: by the Earth, the climate of which is still very tolerable here; by the people who live here, as different as they may be from us and from one another; by collective knowledge about the living connections between nature and spirit, which transcend the rigid viewpoint from which I perceived reality back then.

It wasn't enough to make me a defender of the Earth, a guardian. But like so many, despite all the contradictions, I do my bit to help protect our Earth and its resources.



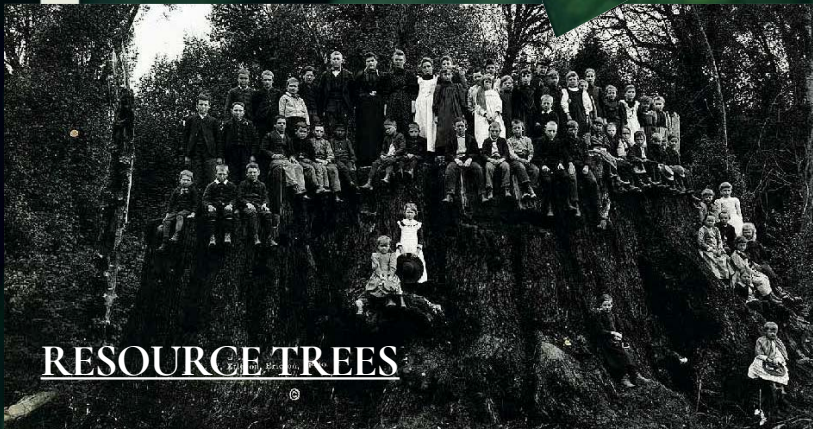
Ulli Westermann is a long-term consultant of Weltfriedensdienst e.V. with the NGO TSURO (Towards Sustainable Use of Resources Organisation) in Chimanimani, Zimbabwe.

More information about the partner NGO TSURO of Weltfriedensdienst:

➤ weltfriedensdienst.de/thema/simbabwe-gemeinschaftlicher-ressourcenschutz-ernaehrungssouveraenitaet

RESOURCES FOR RESO

A Gallery of Inspirations



RESOURCE TREES

There are hardly any giant trees left on our planet. In the USA alone, nearly 98 per cent of the primeval forests have been felled. One NGO has set itself the task of collecting what remains in the ground of the genetic material of these trees and using it to plant new trees to stop climate change. ↗ ancienttreearchive.org

RESOURCE RESOURCES

Just purchased and already broken? Excessive consumption does considerable damage to the Earth. In repair cafes, people make repairs together; tools, material and know-how are available. There are already more than 1,800 repair cafes worldwide. ↗ repaircafe.org/de

RESOURCE MUSIC

In 2012, radical Islamists conquered the north of Mali. Years later, musicians are slowly recapturing the public realm. In a podcast, an ethnomusicologist relates how traditional music has partially self-destructed, but frequently enough has contributed to the resilience of the people. ↗ afropop.org/audio-programs/hip-deep-in-mali-growing-into-music-in-21st-century-bamako



URCES

RESOURCE ART

"I want to understand the life energy that is in me, and in nature," says Andy Goldsworthy. The English artist works with rivers, stones, all natural elements, forms them in landscapes into organic sculptures and makes them breathe anew until they are reclaimed by nature. Sometimes he shapes icicles into a writhing serpent, then he makes stone sculptures that look like pine cones. His resource-based art becomes visible in the films "Rivers and Tides" and "Leaning into the Wind". The documentaries are inspiring homages to the pulse of time and the beauty of the world.



RESOURCE DANCE

Through dance we express ourselves, set our emotions, creativity and traumas in motion and embody our feelings and dreams. In all of the world's cultures, dancing takes place and people find ways to express themselves in dance. The vision of peace is embodied in the dances of universal peace, which are danced worldwide.

➤ dancesofuniversalpeace.org

RESOURCE COMMUNITY



In ecovillages around the world, people come together to live a sustainable life in the strength of a community. The network aims to connect cultures, countries and continents and is composed of five regional networks that span the entire globe

➤ ecovillage.org

RESOURCE CIVIL SOCIETY

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AGROECOLOGY IS MORE THAN ORGANIC FARMING

by Helge Swars

The history of agriculture is a history of the destruction of ecosystems. However, agriculture also has the potential to promote ecosystems.

Cyclone Idai hit Chimanimani in the Eastern Highlands of Zimbabwe on 15 March 2019. The biggest natural disaster in living memory in southern Africa struck the area with immense amounts of rainfall. In many places, the slopes in the mountainous region began to slide. Avalanches of mud and rubble buried houses, streets and fields. The vast quantities of water caused brooks and rivers to swell. Flood waves swept away houses and bridges. More than one hundred people died. Ten thousand became homeless; many were traumatised. Due to the destruction of the fields shortly before the start of harvesting, within a few hours more than 100,000 people became dependent on food aid.

Most people here live from subsistence farming; the nutrition of many is not secure. The average household income is less than 2 dollars a day. Inappropriate land use and the effects of climate change are a creeping catastrophe that aggravates the situation. Conflicts sur-

rounding the distribution of land, the form of land use and access to water are widespread. Nevertheless, reduced to bare existence practically overnight by the cyclone, people came together to cope with the emergency situation. While the scarcity of the available resources suddenly increased, competition regarding their use declined. This contradiction to everyday behaviour can be observed time and again in natural disasters all around the world. It demonstrates to us the existence of universal human values. The question is: How can they carry us in everyday life?

Poor, rural communities are dependent on local resources

On the one hand, availability and distribution of local natural resources are dependent on local conditions, e.g. natural areas, local land use and power structures. On the other hand, they are also subject to global influences, e.g. climate change and international eco-

nomic interdependencies. In poor rural communities such as Chimanimani, dependency on them is immediate for nearly all people. Their opportunities for action, however, are limited to the local level. Even given the global dimension of the problems, that is not necessarily insufficient.

Cyclone Idai didn't just leave a trail of destruction. In many places, the landscape remained nearly unscathed. The chain reaction of torrential rainfall, flash flooding and landslides didn't get started here. The water masses didn't land on bare ground. Diverse, dense plant cover and soakaway ditches along contour lines slowed the flow of water downhill. Good root penetration ensured rapid absorption of vast quantities of water while simultaneously holding the sodden soil together. The people didn't have a cyclone in mind when they met, dug ditches, planted trees and grass and made rules for themselves about using the land in a sustainable manner. For them, it

was a matter of catching water from the usual downpours and harnessing it. In the process, water sources were regenerated, and soil erosion and flooding of farms and fields at the foot of the mountains was stopped.

The joint efforts of these communities in Chimanimani have successfully rehabilitated and even upgraded the environment surrounding them. The cooling effect of the vegetation softens the impact of climate change. Improved agro-ecological cultivation methods and the further development and exchange of local seeds, fruits, honey and other forest products contribute to food sovereignty. At the same time, cooperation has also strengthened social ties and made the communities more resilient.

Communities in industrialised nations are not dependent on local resources.

Most people in industrialised countries like Germany don't directly experience inappropriate local land use or climate change and their negative effects on local natural resources. This is ensured, for example, by so-called "transfer payments" and access to natural resources in other countries. However, the creeping catastrophe due to declining soil fertility and biodiversity or local environmental pollution is only repressed and not dealt with by this. This destructive system is powered by profit from the appropriation of natural resources. These consist of fertile soil, mineral resources, fossil fuels and the genetic pool of plants and animals, but also farming knowledge, traditions and markets. A few ever more powerful protagonists use these to create a global value-added chain of food production that is profitable for them. Three and

a half billion years of evolution are reduced to a few controllable and oversimplified standard processes, often ones created in the lab. As if that wasn't already enough of a contradiction in terms, the natural and finite resources used are simply "consumed". Conflicts such as environmental pollution and climate change or the threat to human health are not taken into account in the creation of value. They are borne by society. This system is safeguarded by political and legal framework conditions and the creation of ever greater dependence on the system by an ever tightening circle of farmers. For the majority of the population of Germany, "resilience" means having a supermarket around the corner.

Producing resource justice through agroecology

The conflict between agroecology and industrialised farming demonstrates the astonishing energy of humanity, which is as destructive as it is creative. On the one hand, the history of agriculture is a history of the destruction of ecosystems. It stretches from the salinisation of the once fertile crescent between the Euphrates and the Tigris beginning with the pre-ancient Sumerians up to the loss of soil fertility and biodiversity and water pollution in the 20th and 21st century in Germany. On the other hand, people have produced thousands of species of agricultural crops and animals in their agricultural history. It gave rise all around the world to cultural landscapes and thus ecosystems which have become a habitat for countless wild species. They learned to penetrate some of nature's most important life-giving processes spiritually or scientifically. Thus, humanity also acquired the ability to not just use eco-

systems, but to also do so sustainably and even upgrade them.

The industrial production method that dominates our agriculture relies on the concentration of property and capital to adapt them to global, universal solutions, for example, when it comes to seeds, fertilisation, pest management, (digital) technology, processing and trade. In this manner, local ecological conditions and social relationships are largely ignored. Agroecology, on the other hand, is knowledge- instead of technology-based, and relies on locally available social capital and promotes it at the same time. Agroecology manifests itself in a very wide variety of designs. What they all have in common is highly functional biodiversity on the farm and the use and support of resilient agroecological systems. In this manner, it embeds itself in local ecosystems and social relationships. At the same time, it is deeply rooted in the cultural heritage of every society.



Helge Swars works at Weltfriedensdienst as a programme coordinator and fundraiser. He is an agricultural scientist and trained mediator.

TIME TO ACT

But how? The magnitude of the problems that we have helped to cause feels overwhelming, and our contribution to change too small. But one group is showing us that a love of the Earth can make us strong and lead to action: Children and young people.

by Anne Beer

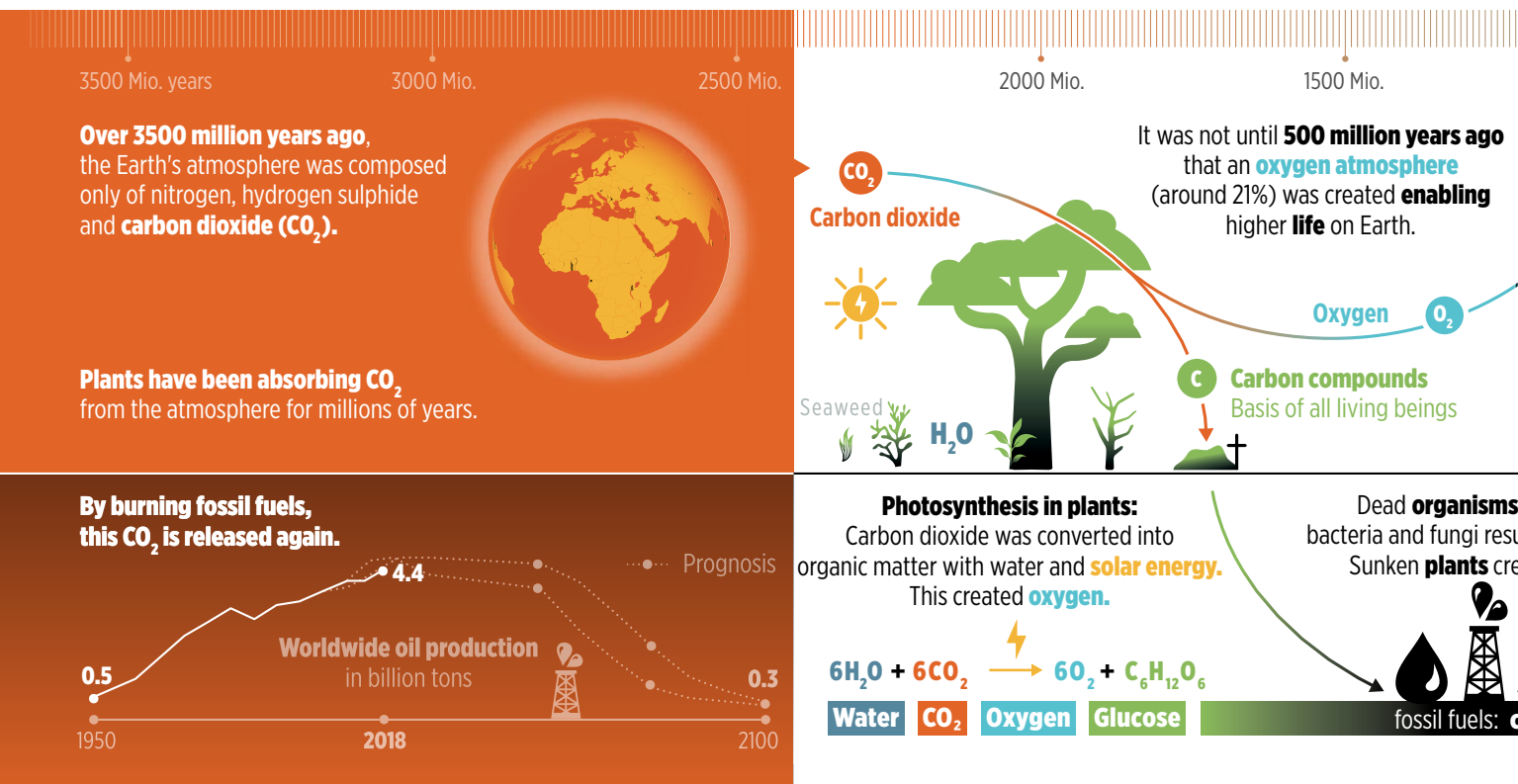
More and more initiatives are coming from young people. They go forward with passion and vision, act instead of letting themselves be cowed, use new media and physical presence or develop high-tech methods.

I sometimes feel like I'm being overtaken in the cruising lane by people who have understood more than I, who turn feelings into action. It's inspiring to witness someone like Greta Thunberg addressing the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and thousands of pupils protesting every Friday. That this call clarion call is heard in Constance and a climate crisis declared as in many other cities.

Children are planting trees, holding charity runs, becoming climate ambassadors and developing a deep relationship with this planet. It does good to experience how these people permit themselves to turn familiar things upside down and campaign for their future, simply refusing to accept "it won't work" as an answer. For me, it means paying close attention, letting myself be affected by this spirit and turning my own passion for the Earth into action. For these movements make it clear: we are all interconnected and one single impulse can change the whole system.

THE RAPID CARBON CONVERSION

In no time, we burn the carbon of the plants that they have absorbed on earth over millions of years.





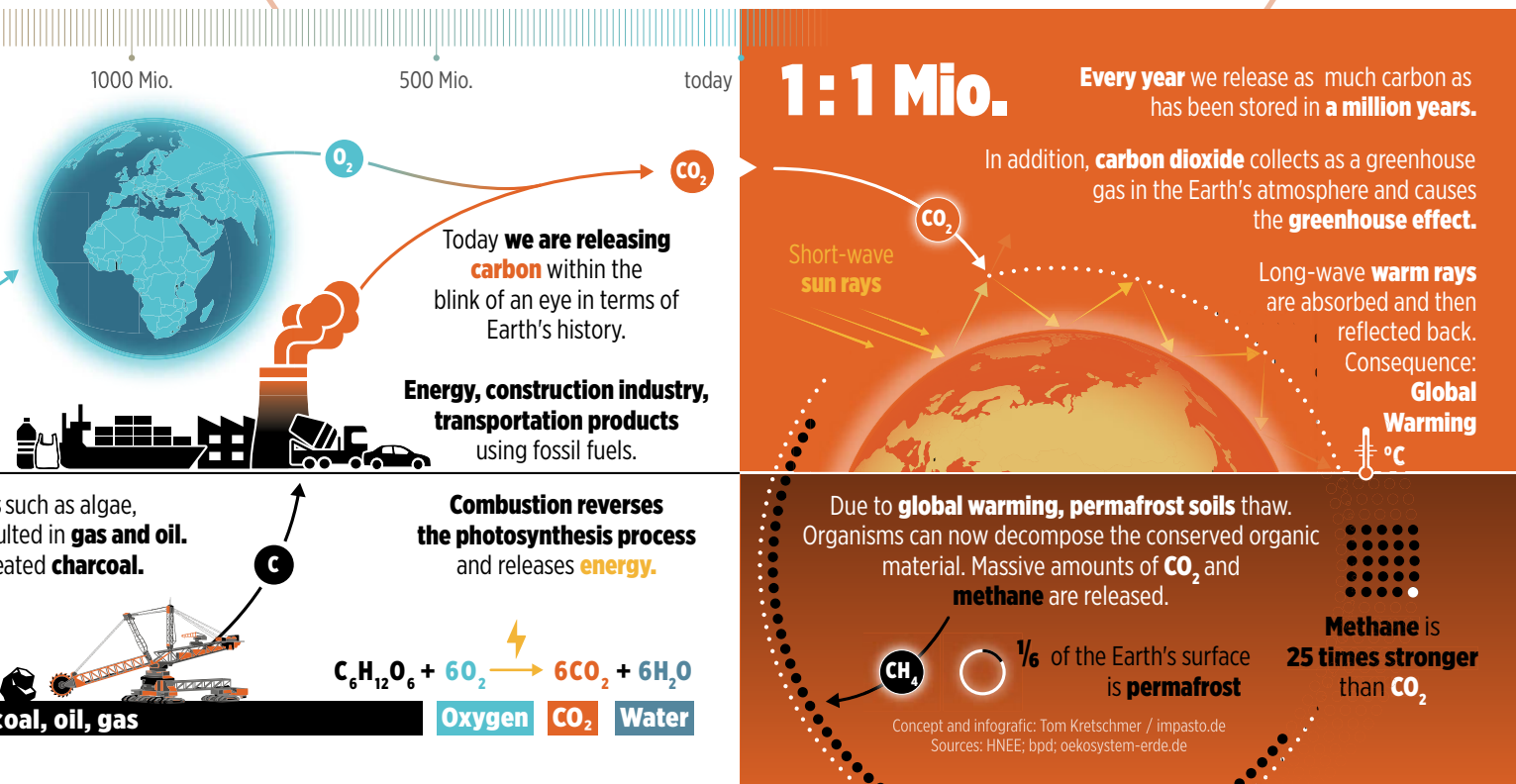
In 2007, Felix Finkbeiner presented a primary school project about the greenhouse effect and the impact of increased CO₂ output on our planet. With his friends, he started “Plant-for-the-Planet” with the aim that every person should plant 150 trees by 2020. The organisation burgeoned into an international movement. In 2011, UNEP, the United Nations Environment Programme, handed over the highly traditional “Billion Tree Campaign” to the children from “Plant-for-the-Planet”. Now they are responsible for the world’s tree counters and have been officially commissioned to motivate all people to plant trees. Now governments, enterprises and private initiatives now report to the children on how many trees have been planted - more than 13 billion as of today. ↗ plant-for-the-planet.org

“Fridays for Future” began with the Swedish pupil Greta Thunberg. For months, she has been going on strike at school on Fridays to fight for real climate protection. Her resolute action has permitted “Fridays for Future” to grow into a worldwide movement of pupils and students. Every Friday, young people demonstrate in the world’s seats of government and make concrete demands. Greta Thunberg spoke before the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and has become, together with all the pupils, an important voice in the fight for our Earth, a voice which is also being heard. ↗ fridaysforfuture.org

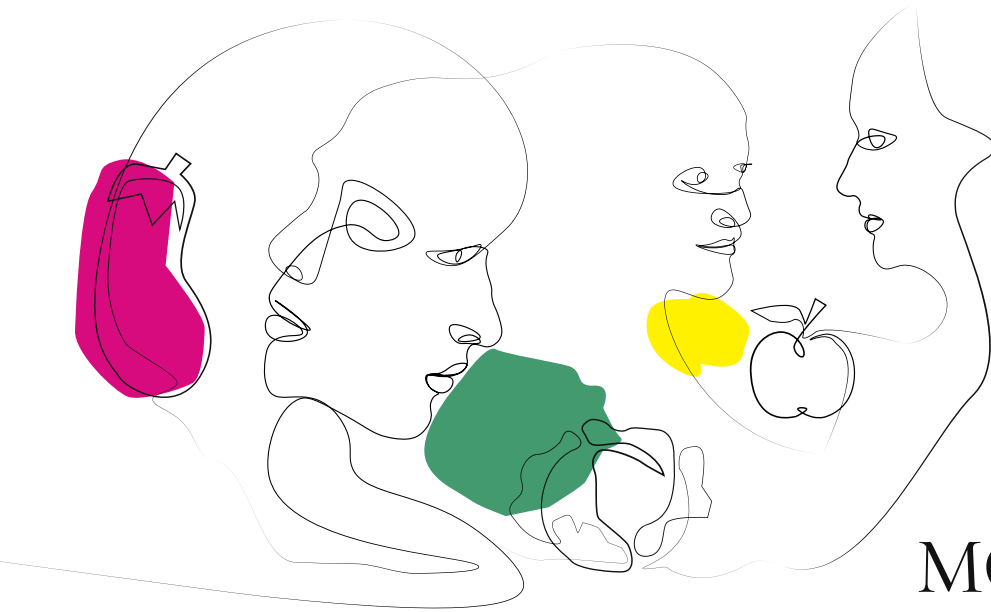


Ridding the oceans of plastic – that is the dream of Boyan Slat, after seeing more plastic than fish in the sea while diving in Greece. At age 18, this native of the Netherlands founded the organisation “Ocean Cleanup”, which is intended to rid the seas of plastic using a passive cleanup system. Since a TEDx talk (tinyurl.com/nrze64x) and the support of a university, the project has been gaining backing worldwide and is now testing the biggest ocean vacuum cleaner thus far. ↗ theoceancleanup.com

Illustration: Tom Kretschmer. The installation artist works as an infographicist and studies at HNEE to understand the relationships of the ecosystem.



WHAT IF ...



... WE MADE THE MOST OUT OF HAVING FEWER THINGS?

by Rob Hopkins

What can we actively do in our neighborhood, in our streets, in our town?
These are key questions of the world wide Transition-Town-Movement.

When friends of mine started this fantastic food market in London, where local producers sell sustainably produced vegetables, fruits, and salads winning lots of awards for it, I asked them: "Why did you do that?" And they said: "We wanted our children to grow up thinking this is normal." My friends are part of Transition Movement London, and this is what the movement is about; making things normal which have not been normal up to now.

Just recently we had the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Report, which said that we needed unprecedented changes in all aspects of society. They particularly said we need to eat less meat. We need to consume less stuff. We need to use less energy. Today, we often hear how irreplaceable resources like oil are and that we have to change fundamentally because it will end.

But no one tells us how much better this place could be with-

out oil. How exciting it would be?

How could we have better parties? How could we have cleaner air and more interesting food and more conversation and more conviviality in this place?

What initially inspired us in the Transition Movement was to tell stories about this place. It's not perfect. But how can we turn it into a better one?

**Our imagination is much more productive
when we are challenged**

There's a beautiful word they have in French which is "bricolage", which means to make the most out of out of having fewer things.

First of all, food has to be local seasonal food. And if we brew beer, we have to brew it within a 10-mile radius. Wow!

Just imagine what we could do! In my experience with the Transition Movement we need to bring the economy closer to home.

Our imagination is much more productive when we put some limits around it! When using oil is not an option anymore: How can we master over the next five or ten years the ability to thrive within bricolage?

At this time in history, we are being asked to be at our most imaginative while looking through the eyes of imagination, of bricolage, of community, of connection—that's where the solutions come from. To me it feels like we're going to cultivate a much healthier relationship to resources by doing so.

Limitations make us creative and really productive. Otherwise, it's like sitting in front of Google and putting nothing in the search engine, pressing return and hoping you'll find something really interesting.

The depletion of resources is the most extraordinary opportunity for us. It is an invitation for us to reimagine everything. Solutions are going to happen if people make them happen, if people are able to feel excited about the possibilities.

The depletion of natural resources is an invitation to think the world from scratch

Within this process, we also are rethinking how democracy works. In Ireland there are citizens' assemblies. They take three big questions, about abortion, for example, or gay marriage, and choose a thousand people randomly across the country, which represent the population. They spend a year meeting with experts. They make suggestions to the Irish government. And then the Irish government makes proposals based on that input. That's a really mature way of living democracy and it's a way that offers a space for trust and brings people closer together by creating spaces where imagination is possible.

"The depletion of natural resources is an invitation to rethink the world from scratch"

The Transition Movement has been always about: What can we do, in our neighborhoods, in our streets, in our town? What can we do to get people together and create what I call "What if?" spaces.

These are spaces where people come together with others to think about the future. They ask "what if" questions: what if in a generation's time the majority of the food, eaten in this place, was grown on the land that surrounds us?

"What if..." we thought about our future together?

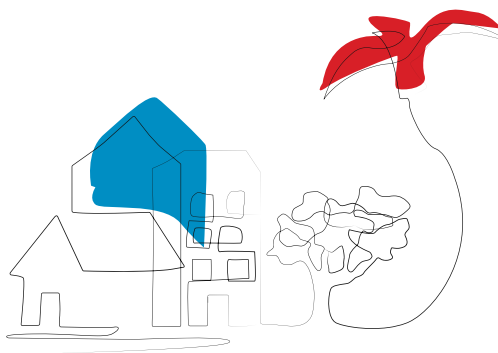
"What if?" questions invite all sorts of possibilities and people come into it with their ideas and it grows from there. So, for me, I think we need to be creating these spaces, whether they are at the local scale, or at town scale and we need to create change in our democracy.

Otherwise you end up with the kind of resurgence of the far-right that we're seeing; where people feel completely powerless and then they start reading conspiracy theories and imagining that the whole system is designed to destroy them. This is just really toxic. So for me creating "What if?" spaces is a key part to turn this mindset around.

What enabled me personally to start this movement? I trace it back to punk when I was 14. Punk had that kind of do-it-yourself culture with the idea "if you don't like the music, make your own." You can't play? It doesn't matter, have a go! Play three cords, form a band. I really like this kind of spirit.

The luck of being at the right time at the right place

And when I heard the expression "Earth Repair" for the first time, the idea that we can actually rebuild the Earth's ecosystems, it just blew me away completely.



When we started the Transition Movement, there were lots of people having ideas for social change. It felt like lots of people on surfboards were waiting for a wave to come. So we happened to stand up at the right time and to kind of catch a wave. It was the time when lots of people were talking about

climate change and energy depletion issues. A lot of the responses tended to be very fear-based, very selfish. They tended to be “I’m going to go and live in the mountains with my gun and my big beans and my toilet.”

I didn’t really fancy that as an option for my family.

I was a teacher of permaculture for a long time. I have a background in Buddhism and I’ve always been very motivated by what they call the “Bodhisattva” ethic, the idea that you live a life of service to other people based on what they need at that time. I’ve been very fortunate in having a family, my wife and my children, who have been supportive of this work. They support me in being able to go out into the world.

I included my four sons in the way of living the Transition Movement but they never had to participate in it. My youngest son is now 16, my eldest is 25.

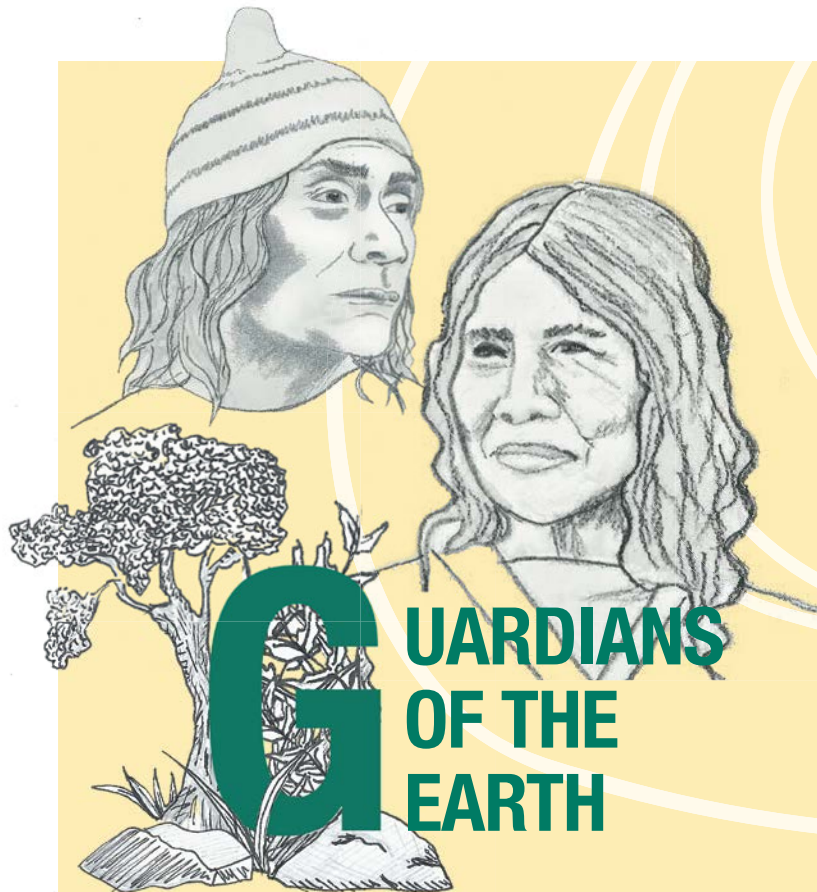
The idea was more that they grew up in a family where growing food was just a normal part of our everyday life, cooking a meal every day using actual ingredients and not like pre-made food. On our house we have solar panels and we turn the lights off when we go out of the room and stuff like that. We are a family where we don’t fly to go on holiday. We don’t eat much meat.

They had lots of playtime and no television and they grew up in a house without smartphones.

The consumer culture is really deeply toxic and it creates another sort of mental damage in young people. Research shows how strong technology impacts the imagination. Right now, I am writing a book about imagination, and my dream is, I would really love to do a TV series about imagination. A TV series, which feeds people’s imagination with possibilities to make new things normal. It feels like we have just started to understand what is needed to fuel our imagination more and more.



Rob Hopkins is the co-founder of the Transition-Town-Movement and one of England’s outstanding environmental activists. He publishes, conducts research, is a permaculture specialist and founded a brewery.



The mountains of the Sierra Nevada de Marta, which are more than 5,000 meters tall and stretch to the sea, were once covered in snow. Now the peaks in Northern Colombia are bright green and barren because the water cycle has been disturbed: the lagoons on the coast are obstructed by summer cottages and power stations. Not enough moisture is able to rise from there which could fall as rain in the rivers or as snow on the peaks. “They sold the clouds,” says a priest of the Kogi.

The Kogi see themselves as the “elder brothers”. Their name means “jaguar”. The people of the Global North, on the other hand, are the “younger brothers”, who no longer know how they should treat nature. The Kogi draw their knowledge from an ancient tradition originating from a time long before the conquest of Colombia in the early 16th century. During the massacres of the indigenous population of Colombia, many Kogi were also killed. A few, however, were able to survive by completely withdrawing to the mountains. There they perceive just how acute the lack of water is. “It saddens us to see that not all people do what they should to respect the earth. We need our younger brother to help us.”

The ancient knowledge is transmitted by the priests. Their initiation takes years, and in the beginning of it they get to know the world

Connected by a Golden Thread

In order to establish resource justice today,
we need the ancient wisdom of indigenous people.
The knowledge of the Kogi is one of the sources
that can support us to face climate change and
to reinstall sustainable living on Earth.



only through stories living in darkness until they get to see the beauty of the world. During the time of darkness, they learn how to sustain connection to Aluna, the creating force. They draw their knowledge from this connection and the oral stories.

Scientists nowadays benefit from their insights. Zoologists from London reach out to determine the habitat of animals, environmental scientists confirm their insights about the connection between the destruction of the coast and the drying out of the mountain lakes in the film documentary "Aluna".

**We are sad to see
that not all humans
honour the Earth**

The Little Brothers need sophisticated technology to find their insights. The Elder Brothers get them during their inner journeys through the universe. Their knowledge goes beyond the science of the Global North.

The Kogi see themselves as the guardians of the earth. So that their younger brother might learn from them what he must not destroy, the Kogi walked some years ago to the holy natural monuments on the coast of Colombia. They are convinced that in the world of the 21st century, the connection to the Earth has frequently been lost. According to their tradition, the Great Mother Aluna, who gave birth to the idea of the world at the beginning of time, pulled a black thread

across the Earth to mark important places. Now the Kogi have marked this black line on the coast of Colombia using a thread with which they have travelled from place to place. This time, the thread was brightly shining like the gold from which they have fashioned jewellery for centuries.

We, the younger brothers and sisters, continue to weave the thread through this issue. It springs forth from the knowledge born of the dark caves of the Kogi and is intended to connect that which is capable of preserving life: the clouds, the thoughts, and also science and business, if they heed the guardians of the earth.

Joachim Chr. Wehnelt

FILM TIP:

"Aluna" on YouTube ↗ kurzelinks.de/xwf9

The Kogi live in the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta in Northern Colombia. Their language is part of the family of languages of the Chibcha. Around 1630, Spanish troops killed many members of the indigenous tribe. Today, an estimated 4000 to 6000 Kogi live in the mountains.

YOU CANNOT STAY THE SAME WHEN YOU TRULY TAKE IN A POWERFUL STORY

Kompass: What is the power of a good story?

Charles Eisenstein: I can answer that in two ways. One is, a conventional story like a tale tells a story that has a power to influence people on a deeper level than through normal persuasive rhetoric. It reaches into the unconscious mind and gets past people's intellectual defences. So it's a really effective way to communicate to people. I use story in a much broader sense, as a social or political narrative. This is a system of meanings that conveys meaning to human beings in their lives and coordinates their behaviour and their productive gifts into a coherent whole. Highly specialized roles wouldn't do if they weren't part of a story that gives meaning to those roles. Human beings do anything by creating a story, and it could be something as tangible as building a house or an airport or a train system or an organisation. But it could also be the less conscious stories that create a society that aren't invented by any one person. They have a collective telling and originated organically and historically. These are the most powerful stories. What we as a society or as a civilization understand to be real, to be important and valuable, is because of these stories. If we want any substantial change in our civilization, we have to change these stories. A lot of my work is about changing the deep stories or the mythology that runs our culture.

Charles Eisenstein tells a new story in books and speeches around the world. It is a story of a world that resources itself because people relate to it through heart and mind. In a conversation with the makers of the Kompass he offers his tools and perspectives on how peace workers can co-create a new story themselves.

Kompass: We live in an age of narratives. How does the digital evolution change our stories and storytelling?

Eisenstein: People are becoming more conscious of narratives and the construction of narratives. Old narratives are becoming conscious and are losing some of their power because people dismiss them: "that's just spin, that's just political optics, that's public relations and advertising." Yet the most powerful narratives are the ones that are not conscious, that people take for granted as just part of reality itself, like the narrative that science is making the world better or that the best way to solve a problem is to find a cause to fight. Why are the honey bees disappearing? Find a cause! Looking for that cause, we find a mite, a mite that lives on the beach. OK, there's the cause and the solution! Douse the beehive in chemicals twice a day and that should solve the problem! When it doesn't, we don't know what to do because our story says this is the cause and this is the solution to actually solve the problem.

Kompass: How can we start to find a solution that is real?

Eisenstein: We need to step outside of that story, outside the story of the mite but also outside the story of the cause. Because if we really study colony collapse disorder like the collapse of the honeybees, we realize that there could be many, many causes. From neonicotinoid pesticides to habitat destruction to the ways that bees are confined and fed – which are really unnatural – to the killing of the drones.

There are so many things that people who are holistic beekeepers identify as possible causes. It is the product of a whole way of being, a whole kind of relationship with bees and with nature. So, there isn't one cause anymore. That is the power of story

at work, the power of a story to limit us in an endless loop of applying solutions that come from the same mindset as the problem, and also the power of a story to transcend the menu of problems and solutions that we are stuck in right now.

Kompass: What are the conditions for a transformative story?

Eisenstein: I think that there has to be a readiness and a willingness to hear the story.

As a storyteller I have learned to be sensitive to the readiness and not to push a story on to someone. I understand stories as if they were conscious beings themselves thinking, okay story: What is your purpose? What does it serve to tell you? Why are you here? That helps me to clarify whether I am telling the story for its true purpose or whether I am exploiting the story in order to serve maybe some ego purpose.

Kompass: What is the story that needs to be told to find another way of dealing with resources?

Eisenstein: The story that I'm working with most strongly is the Living Earth story which says that the climate crisis will not be solved by just being cleverer in the way that we extract resources and dispose of waste, but that our basic relationship with and perception of the planet needs to change towards seeing Earth as alive, as a living being.

The health of the Earth depends on the health of its organs and systems. The forests, the waters, the soil, the whales, the elephants, the mangrove swamps, the wetlands; reducing their crucial function to a matter of carbon sequestration is a big mistake. That would be like reducing the function of your liver or your heart to one function. But all of your organs serve multiple functions. Your heart is an endocrine organ as well as a circulatory organ and it's also a neurological organ. For that reason, one of the stories that I want to replace is the story of carbon reductionism. I want to transition from a story where green means low-carbon to a story where green means: we are taking care of life.

Kompass: How do you tell this story? How do you bring about this change?

Eisenstein: It's not just about the skill of telling a story. For the story to be powerful, you have to be speaking from the place where the story is coming from. So, if you are telling a story of peace or forgiveness or reconciliation, it has to be coming from a corresponding vibration in yourself. Otherwise people will not believe you; they will feel like you're manipulating them.

Maybe just to understand where I'm coming from: For me it's a way of making people understand or making people feel but also making them do things differently. For the story to have

its maximum power, you have to create conditions where the story can be received.

**If you are telling a story
of peace, it has to be coming
from a corresponding vibration
in yourself.**

This also happened in peace processes in South Africa, for example, and Rwanda, the Truth and Reconciliation practices or restorative circles. People are devising social processes that allow stories to be heard. And then to trust that when the story is received, then the behaviour will change. You cannot stay the same when you truly take in a powerful story.

I think one of the weaknesses of environmental rhetoric today is that there's often this undercurrent of blame that creates defensive reactions: "Shame on you, you're using more than your share of the Earth's resources".

It's not compassionate because the question is: why are you using more than your share of the Earth's resources? Is it because you're bad? Well, that is part of the same old mentality; find an enemy, find a cause, that I was talking about earlier. It is the same mentality of war. The mentality of war, the mentality of fighting evil, is closely entwined with the war on nature.

We are surrounded by relationships. We are surrounded by other nations and other people, other beings. If we accept this, the question is no longer: How can we extract maximum benefit for ourselves from these 6 hectares of land, but we can ask things like: what does this land want? How are we meant to serve? How are we meant to create together? Those questions come naturally for many indigenous people who have been very active in maintaining the health of their environments in some places, but for civilization, it's a new question.

Kompass: Do you know an answer to it, to what the land wants and how we can serve it?

Eisenstein: I don't know the answer to this question. The important thing is to start asking the question. And to even ask the question we have to begin seeing nature, seeing the world in a different way and seeing ourselves in a different way. The answer might be something very local and for other people it might be more systemic.

When we talk about the level of governments and corpora-

tions, they also strongly need to be addressed. A debtbased financial system can only be sustained with growth. Countries like Brazil or Ecuador have foreign debt of tens of billions of dollars. And the only way to make payments on that debt is to export something to generate foreign exchange.

If we want to say to Brazil, don't cut down your rainforests, don't drill for oil, don't ruin your wetlands but keep paying – that is hypocrisy. It is impossible. And the same thing applies to us as individuals. If we have a money system that mostly rewards our participation in the extraction of resources, then it's going to be very hard for us to do anything else. So, we're swimming against the current of the money system in trying to heal the Earth. That's one thing that has to change. We also need to have an awareness of the global dynamics of the trade treaties like the free trade treaties that facilitate the extraction of resources. Everything has to change from our consciousness to the relationships to the systems to the stories. It is like coming out of this linear thinking to multi-dimensional thinking.

Kompass: What would that look like?

Eisenstein: I don't think anyone has the plan. I don't think visions are actually something that we can create. I think that they come to us. The vision of a more beautiful world is coming to us now and every act that we commit to serve that calls up the vision even more strongly. It's like anything that you do in your work in service to peace.

Then the vision comes more strongly.

Interview by Anne Beer und Joachim Chr. Wehnelt



Charles Eisenstein, who graduated from Yale university in mathematics and philosophy, lives in the USA and recently published the book "Climate" telling a new story about re-source.



Back to the Source, into the Future

Superposition

In this Kompass, our authors discover various resources, from the diversity of animals to new legal standards, which—as a basis of peace work—are vital in the world. With their articles, they may trigger shock about the state of the Earth, as described by Ernst Ulrich von Weizsäcker, invite the reader to share an aha-experience with Hans Jörg Friedrich's definitions of resource justice, or supply inspiration with Rob Hopkins' punk approach to sustainable living.

“The beginning of all science is wonder that things are as they are,” says Aristotle. In this special issue, that sense of wonder was stimulated by the local knowledge of the Kogi of Colombia. With their centuries-old myth of the golden thread of light, which also runs through this issue, they lead us together with the other authors back to the source. This journey through Re-Source becomes even more wondrous when local knowledge connects to the insights of the science of the Global North. After Isaac Newton demonstrated in 1666 that a white beam of light is woven from different threads of coloured light, Max Planck introduced the concept of Quanta in 1900. Since then, not only physics has changed, but our whole world as well.

Since then, light has consisted of tiny quanta that are simultaneously both waves and particles. In scientific terms, a quantum can be in a superposition; in other words, it can have two different values at the same time. As soon as the quantum is measured, the state collapses into a single value. Thus, any observer intervenes through the act of measurement – in this understanding, an observer as in Newton's times does not exist anymore. It's these insights that made possible all of the microelectronics tucked away inside devices like mobile phones. And that in turn unleashed an undreamt-of digital revolution.

Anne Baring is a researcher who, in her published work, unites the local knowledge of natives with quantum physics. Now, Anne Baring has written a letter for Kompass – a letter from the future. What does the world look like in 2030, by which time the UN's 17

A letter from the future was enclosed here.
In case it is already taken,
you are welcome to get a pdf of it by
sending a request to
➔ info@weltfriedensdienst.de

**“If quantum mechanics
hasn't profoundly
shocked you, you
haven't understood it yet.”**

Niels Bohr, Danish scientist

global goals for sustainable development are supposed to be fulfilled? How do we master the challenges of the future? The letter is enclosed with this issue. **This is how we connect the thread that the Kogi of Colombia are spinning for us, and which leads us through this issue, to the future; to one of the futures that lies ahead.** The texts about initiatives from countries like England, Zimbabwe, Mali and Germany demonstrate with very different approaches that we can help shape the changes ahead by referring to and connecting with the Earth using different approaches in each case. **In peace work, the Earth is a frequently forgotten stakeholder.**

We hope that the articles by our committed authors open your eyes to the field on which we stand and in which we work. There are no observers. Re-source, back to the source, is a journey that needs everybody; in the projects, in the offices, in every country.

We hold the thread to this in our hand.

Warmly,
Anne Beer and Joachim Chr. Wehnelt
(KOMPASS Editorial Team of Weltfriedensdienst e. V.)



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