

Regenerative Cultures: Pathway to Policy

Definitions

To Regenerate - to give new life or energy to, to revitalize

Sustainability - meeting our needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs

Regeneration goes beyond the term "sustainability", from exploitation of finite resources to a paradigm shift of Copernican perspective. Our modern model of natural science has written humankind out of Nature. In place of a fear of scarcity, the consequent generation of control and a resulting "need" to wage war on any plant or animal (including bacteria and viruses) on this planet, regeneration enables us to re-join Nature. The Human Genome Project has shown us that the number of human cells inside us that set us uniquely apart from Nature are dwarfed by the number of cells, the number of bacteria and viruses, that put us squarely **in** Nature, just as our Earth is one small part of a universe of planets and stars.

Regenerative Development: The Copernican perspective enables us to initiate a process of co-evolution with all of life and all that nurtures the process of life on this planet Earth.

The real question becomes; "**How do we re-align human activity with the evolution of the ecological system of Nature within us and all around us?**"

WHY

There have now been enough regenerative community projects set up to demonstrate that communities that live in harmony with Life on this Planet are more productive, healthier, require less regulation and have greater purpose than communities set up based on fear of scarcity and taking as much as possible from a finite planet.

As we **MUST** now attend to mitigation of Climate Change if the human species and other species is to survive, so we **MUST** attend to regeneration in Environmental terms, Social terms and in terms of the Spirit of whole Communities who are themselves parts of larger communities and constellations. To fail to attend to Regeneration spells death and disaster for the human race as we reach the tipping point of survival, knowingly putting our grandchildren in the way of serious harm.

HOW

The vast number of well documented regenerative community projects and ecovillages have been working on the 'how' for years and can show how to be successful.

Regenerative Communities naturally attract people who are interested in their own well being and also that of others. They attract people who look for meaning, not in gaining power over others, but rather in acting with true integrity in upholding the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set in 2015 by ALL193 members of the United Nations General Assembly and intended to be achieved by the year 2030.

The Sustainable Development Goals have become a blueprint for LIFE for the planning of, administrating of, creating infrastructure for and developing of more than 10,000 Ecovillages.

However, these ecovillages are mostly rural and even the largest of these are home to no more than 2000 people. Most house less than half this population. Nevertheless, these small rural communities

Regenerative Cultures: Pathway to Policy

have established a way of developing that has at its heart regeneration, creating a Network of communication, collaboration and support across the world.

Simultaneously communities within cities have recognized the need for a global shift in perspective and have created blueprints for change within a city environment.

Communities of all sizes and from all cultures are creating a multi-dimensional meshwork, as more and more people recognize the urgency for changing our shared beliefs and practices and the infrastructure and systems that hold old beliefs and practices in place.

This regenerative meshwork is creating an evolutionary intelligence working towards creating healthy towns, cities, countries, regions; Communities For Future.

It uses systems thinking and Integral Design to build both the inner and outer capacity in individuals and communities through coaching, education and training. It pays attention to Culture and Structures, using peaceful and active Inquiry to generate discussions and collaboration; creating advocacy and policy strategies to bridge divides and responding, rather than reacting to, critical and emergent contexts.

WHAT

As we move forward, transitioning into a world that will sustain into future generations, policy and decision making, actions and practice must

- Learn from nature and practise whole systems thinking
- Identify assets, needs and leverage points
- Adapt solutions to scale and context
- Be aware of privilege and use it for the benefit of all
- Build alliances across all divides
- Engage all stakeholders in designs for the future
- Spread core patterns of regeneration
- Listen to the feedback of the world, designing feedback and feed forward loops.

Areas of vital importance are best formulated by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by the United Nations in 2015 as a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure that by 2030 all people enjoy peace and prosperity.

Education

Currently our education system is focused on creating obedient citizens rather than free thinking people. Career change is most often denied suitability due to the lack of a diploma and this restricts expansion of thinking in any particular area and reduces innovation. The challenge of the times requires educating for transitions, that is educating professionals and individuals to lead transformation of reality towards a cooperative society and regenerative future.

Health Care



Regenerative Cultures: Pathway to Policy

Currently the sicker the population is, the higher the bills and income for the medical and pharmaceutical industries.

We need to create policies that have as their baseline the concept that the healthier the population, the higher the esteem and income for the doctor; and that place true emphasis on **Health and Care**. This includes truthfully educating citizens and doctors on what constitutes **good nutrition and activity**, focusing on **clean air and clean water and thus** providing an underlying basis for good health.

Politics and Regulation

Support from the EU, both economic and otherwise, should always be tied to a **substantive report** that must be submitted by the beneficiary every 6 months and within 6 months of the end of the project. Late reports should incur an automatic per-day fine. Reports should be peer-reviewed by financially independent bodies and not subject to adjudication by the courts. Negative reviews automatically should entail full repatriation of the financial support within 3 months of review submission.

Decisions must be made for the highest possible good of the various aspects of survival (individual, offspring, family, group, society, other living beings, universe, spirituality).

As much as necessary, as little as possible!

Life-enhancing community-based decisions fill with joy and promote a willingness to take responsibility

Business and Economy

Here we have a critical pathway dependency which up until now has blocked any significant progress towards climate justice. The attraction of profit in the short-term overwhelms longer-term considerations, even for the most "enlightened" of those in control of money, and therefore political power.

Instead of using true full-cost accounting for the assessment of any project, any cost, such as for maintaining or improving the environment, is termed an "extensive cost" and is not included in the cost/benefit analysis. Using cost/benefit, as opposed to risk/benefit, is inherently accepted. Why? Businesses should work on the principle of every waste is a resource, thus there is no such thing as waste. Already there are examples of this.

For example

- Nexalus focuses on electronics, which produce excessive heat, and finds a way to make the thermal energy useful. Data centers generate over 140m tons of CO2 annually to feed our demand for data, and as we consume more, they build more. Nexalus uses water to cool the data centers and make sure the water becomes hot enough to be useful for heating in neighbouring commercial, industrial and domestic sectors.
- Mission Resources whose invention the HERU takes everyday items, which would have been destined for disposal, such as coffee cups, plastics and nappies, and converts them into energy to heat water for the occupants of the home or commercial building.

Businesses that focus on solutions to the problems of resource, climate change and biodiversity should be incentivised whilst those that continue to promote fossil fuels and destruction of environments should be heavily penalised.

Livelihood

The current economic and social models focus on the well-being of individuals rather than of whole communities and the wellbeing and financial profit for a small number of people are the most important decision-making criteria.

Much as first the industrial revolution and then the technological revolution were supposed to create a

Regenerative Cultures: Pathway to Policy

world of plenty and give people more free time it is clear that it is neither technology nor resource that creates the unequal societies that dominate the western world.

We need to focus on Livelihood options that uphold the SDG's and reward people for all and any contributions to the community.

The paradigm shift needed is away from individualism and isolation and towards generating resources to create a community based resilient environment.

As communities we need to decide what we value and enable livelihood for those providing what we value.

An example of this is the health care sector during the Covid 19 pandemic, when it became clear that frontline workers were vital and yet are amongst the lowest paid and from the most vulnerable and marginalised communities.

If we are to work towards the SDG's then SDG Goals 1. No Poverty and 2. Zero Hunger requires that we create a model of livelihood that is radically different to the current model that defines long hours at work and no free time and which most values activities that are not vital to life.

Pilot projects for [Universal Basic Income](#) are being trialled in several countries of the EU. These projects should be taken seriously and evaluated regarding their contribution to achieving the sustainable development goals. Those that successfully contribute to the sustainable development goals should be rapidly expanded and further developed.

Planning

Whilst planning strategy and planning policy and law is developed at national and international government level, the interpretation of that planning policy is carried out at local level and is often subject to approval by local government who are often subject to lobbying by corporations who are putting in planning applications.

It must be seen that this is putting the cart before the horse, especially where Climate Change and environmental restoration is concerned.

As an example, however much a national government states a goal of reaching carbon neutrality by a certain date, when local governments approve planning applications that work against that commitment, the goal will be out of reach. Whatever is approved by local planning today sets the policy for the next twenty or thirty years. If local planning approves a fracking site or a drilling site, they have effectively committed to fossil fuel production for years to come, and this has major implications for distribution of those fossil fuels and lack of commitment to renewable energy.

Planning policy must be quickly communicated and enforceable at national and local level.

Another example is when local planning is approved without proper environmental impact assessments or when the environmental impact assessment is organized by the company applying for planning permission. It is then left to citizens to raise the awareness and the funding to go to court to protect natural habitats that in theory are already protected by European Law.

Justice

Nature - all of life and not a select few - must be given legal and enforceable rights. The fictitious entity of corporations has been given them. People have legal and enforceable rights, corporations have enforceable rights why is nature excluded?

Our existing models of politics and government, manufacturing, commerce, agriculture, education, community, justice and economics are all failing to "take swift and unified global action" to care for our common home.

Regenerative Cultures: Pathway to Policy

We, as a species, are however incredibly smart and inventive, and it is our use of language that leads to our action. It is time to build new models that make the existing models obsolete, however human behaviour is such that we only take action when something is bothering us. If everything seems fine, we happily go along with business as usual. It is time to become inventive; and to do that we have to become anxious about the future. We must use language that urges all of us not to accept the current slow pace of change but envisages radical change. This pushes political decision makers towards that change.

If politicians in government, instead of resolving to 'examine the possibilities' for such legislation as making 'ecocide' a crime, instead voted to MAKE ecocide a crime and did so rapidly, then suddenly for the decision makers at the top of organisations that create ecocides, business as usual will no longer be fine. Suddenly they will have to take action; existing business models will threaten them with criminal proceedings and they will rapidly invent new and better business models.

Society

The UN states that 68% of the world population is projected to live in Urban areas by 2050. Tokyo is the world's largest city with an agglomeration of 37 million inhabitants, followed by New Delhi with 29 million. Shanghai has 26 million, and Mexico City and São Paulo, each have around 22 million inhabitants. Cairo, Mumbai, Beijing and Dhaka all have close to 20 million. Whilst cities in Europe are somewhat smaller, nevertheless they can range between 1 million inhabitants in Cologne and 15.5 million inhabitants in Istanbul.

Almost all the examples of regenerative communities are small eco-villages set in rural areas and with fewer than 2,000 inhabitants. The largest of the Eco-villages could fit 500 times into each the smaller European Cities and could fit 7,750 times into Istanbul.

Many of the blockers to creating regenerative communities can be found within the challenges of upscaling what works in those ecovillages such that they can work in large fast-growing urban agglomerations.

With regards to society this needs a major focus on social justice, such that the extremes of inequality are dramatically reduced and it is made possible for people to create communities AND indeed to create regenerative communities.

Most Cities have grown out of villages and then smaller urban environments. Most of these smaller urban environments have no local governance and thus no say in the policy of their own future. These neighbourhoods need to be reconfigured to create regenerative communities.

Within this context policy makers and planners need to plan for the health and happiness of people and ecosystems rather than for economic profit of large industry. Cities need to be co-designed for people and community rather than for cars.

Agriculture

CAP: Agricultural subsidies on the basis of farm acreage need to be immediately terminated if we are to make progress on climate justice.

These subsidies create a land use which added to monocultures and industrial farming practices create a decrease in land suitable for food production because they deplete the soil rather than sustaining a nutrition rich soil with sequestered carbon.

Agricultural subsidies should be based on regenerative agriculture and holistic farming practices that aim to improve soil health organically, improve the water cycle, reverse climate change and expand biodiversity. This will entail avoiding use of chemical pesticides and naturally increasing the amount of arable topsoil, which to create a healthier food system.

Regenerative Cultures: Pathway to Policy

Moving forward

Just as the concept of the European Union is not meant to degenerate the kaleidoscopic multitude of cultures that make it up into some form of tasteless "mush", so does European regenerative design offer us diverse responses to co-evolving with the richness and intelligence of life within and around us. On a regenerative farm the more diverse the plant and animal life the more stable and balanced is the response to any crisis. Plants and animals are much healthier. The farm is three to five times more productive than an industrial farm.

A regenerative culture, rooted in an understanding of **place** with its history and its uniqueness, can engage its people into a **sense of belonging** which ultimately furthers **caaring**. **Regenerative development** works with **whole systems**, nested within each other. It **develops the capabilities** of local groups on an economic, social, cultural and environmental level. It builds a rich common **collaborative soil of Trust, Reciprocity, Respect and Vitality**.

With this as a framework, many things follow. As Socrates asked Phaedrus long ago, "What is good and what is not good? Need we ask anyone to tell us these things?"

To achieve a healthy global society we need diversity and we need collaboration, cooperation and respect for all. This requires that policy makers, media and public figures (of all levels) who hold influence and sway need to accept the responsibility of supporting diversity.

Conclusions

In each of these areas there is a wealth of knowledge that is being amassed and has been amassed by communities who are living using regenerative principles and following the sustainable development goals.

However these voices are often not involved in policy making. In order to make policy making sustainable and regenerative there must be a shift in process such that the voices of the many communities of practice are heard.

The policy making groups should include

- Citizens
- Business Innovators
- Civic managers
- NGOs and Charities (The third sector)

These should all be around the table, working **together** to solve problems and collaborate on policy for change. The meetings need to be facilitated such that all are equally heard and collaborate fully.

Policy should only be made when these four voices are all equally represented.

We urgently need to find elegant solutions to our environmental problems.

However, we not only need technological solutions and community efforts but we also need the political will to respond to those technological solutions, creating policy that supports them and puts them within reach by using subsidies and grants. We need policy that allows communities to choose a regenerative future and works on clearing up our unsustainable past.