



COMMON
EARTH

Summary of Commonwealth Meeting

October 3rd and 4th, 2019



Group photo Friday, October 4, 2019 high-level meeting. Used with permission from the Commonwealth Secretariat

Reflections from the Executives



Rola Khoury CEO



Freya Yost COO

Over the last four years of working on Common Earth, a recurring question has persistently surfaced and begged a deeper level of inquiry: is our Earth, our astoundingly beautiful and intricate home, as alive as we are? Is Gaia a living being?

Many human minds, new and ancient, have observed and worked in relationship to the life force of Earth. Their observations and stories tell of the interconnective tissues of our planet that support relationships from micro to macro much like our own human bodies. These stories are of whales who bring up nutrient-rich waters from the deep that nurture a spectrum of life on the surface. They are of salmon who transport ocean nutrients upstream and deep into the forest, of beavers who slow down water cycles in the landscape. The stories tell of coral reefs that safeguard coastlines, of fields of untilled topsoil that hold and distribute water to where it is most needed. And how the Amazon Rainforest's "flying river" of 20 billion tonnes of water vapor released daily influences rainfall as far away as Canada.

These stories are deeply embedded in a life web full of synergies and, if you look closely enough, full of love. Yet our own official sense-making process is entirely based on quantification and love plays—if at all—a very marginal role. Scientific method has illuminated vast inter-workings that, when measured, can provide an effective map for coordinated action. At the same time, the prerequisite that we measure a nature that is "other" before we deem it worth protecting is keeping us firmly lodged in a worldview that says life doesn't matter until we quantify its value. It is time to summon the collective courage and will to change this by stepping out of duality and into greater communion with life.

For millennia, indigenous communities around the world have understood the interconnectivity of life on Earth. They understand that what we do to the Earth, we do to ourselves, because we are part of a collection of life on Earth that forms a living, breathing being. As the climate crisis worsens, and the boundaries between "inner" and "outer" increasingly dissolve, we stand at a crossroads. Will we continue to live separately from nature? Or will we, instead, from a shared sense of common humanity, make a leap towards greater wholeness?

Common Earth is focused on illuminating and scaling efforts that work in support of the life force of Earth. Regenerative development, a whole-systems approach to improving relationships between interconnected systems, works from the unique potential of places rather than focusing

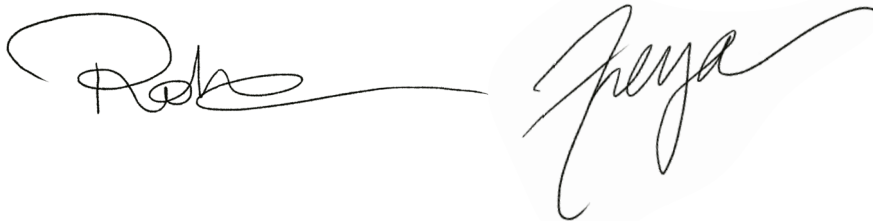
on problems. This participatory approach rings true to many Commonwealth member states—in particular, the small developing island states—which want to localize development trajectories and be active change agents in their future rather than passive recipients of charity.

Cloudburst Foundation, partner of the Commonwealth Secretariat since 2017, is continuing to support the development of Common Earth and regenerative development as a key strategy for addressing the climate crisis and SDGs. Cloudburst launched its Common Earthers program that draws in supportive communities and will be rolling out several important transmedia communications projects in 2020. Stories underpin our world. And just as they have driven extraction and degeneration, they can also help us rediscover and align ourselves around a higher healing purpose. In many ways, the new story is the antithesis of the current one: it is inclusive, has a place for everyone and invites out the best in us. It enhances life in ripples.

We invite you to relearn along with us, with collective and open inquiry, what is possible when we step into a living planet view. Thank you to all who attended our Regenerative Development Summit at the Commonwealth Secretariat in October. We speak from the heart when we say that what took place was a sacred event. Special thanks to the Commonwealth Secretariat and all the staff that supported, participated and shaped this effort.

On behalf of all of us at Common Earth and Cloudburst, we would like to wish you the best for the New Year. Let 2020 be a turning point towards greater love and reverence of life. And, as Wendell Berry said, *be joyful though you have considered all the facts.*

In solidarity,
Rola and Freya

The image shows two handwritten signatures in black ink. The signature on the left is 'Rola' and the signature on the right is 'Freya'. Both are written in a fluid, cursive style.

Key Participants

Albert Bates / Global Village Institute for Appropriate Technology
Andrea Illy / Illy Caffè SpA
Ben Haggard / Common Earth & Regenesis Group
Celia Mahung / Toledo Institute for Development and Environment
Chris Gorell Barnes / Blue Marine Foundation
Christine Green / Bring PIPA Home
Christopher Nesbitt / Maya Mountain Research Farm
Dr. Daniel Wahl / Regenerative Development Consultancy
Dr. Eduard Muller / University of International Cooperation
Dr. Greg Stone / PIPA Trust
Dr. James Bacchus / University of Central Florida
Dr. Michael McDonald / Alliance for Global Resilience and Regeneration
Dr. Nabeel Goheer / Commonwealth Secretariat
Dr. Nick Hardman-Mountford / Commonwealth Secretariat
Dr. Stuart Cowan / Capital Institute & Regenerative Communities Network
Dr. Thomas Goreau / Global Coral Reef Alliance
Francine Baron / Government of Dominica
Freya Yost / Common Earth and Cloudburst Foundation
Frith Walker / Auckland Regeneration Agency & Auckland Placemaking Week
Gemma Nelson / Commonwealth Youth Climate Change Network
Grace Hutchinson / Insight Share
Isobel Bruun-Kiaer / Auckland Council
Jane Mihingarangi Ruka / Waitaha Executive Grandmothers Council
Janet Charles / High Commission of Dominica
Jason Taylor / The Source Project
Jason Twill / Urban Apostles
Jeremy Gilley / Peace One Day
Johnnie Freeland / Mana Whenua Forum for Auckland's Climate Action Framework
Kareati Waysang / PIPA Trust
Kate Raworth / Donut Economics
Kerrie Blackmore Freeland / Halberg Foundation
Loren Cardeli / A Growing Culture
Maddy Harland / Permaculture Magazine
Mario Yanez / Inhabit Earth
May East / Gaia Education
Nabuti Mwemwenikarawa / PIPA Trust
Nichie Abo / Kalinago Tribal Council
Nick Lunch / Insight Share
Patricia Scotland / Commonwealth Secretariat
Paulo Kautoke / Commonwealth Secretariat
Ricardo Peon / Capital Común
Rola Khoury / Common Earth & Cloudburst Foundation
Roma Vedamuttu / Commonwealth Youth Forum 2020 TaskForce
Sharon Chang / Future Architects
Shimeque Smith / Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning, Sustainable Development and information Technology St. Vincent and the Grenadines
Stephanie Batts / Auckland Climate Action Framework & Pare Kore
Taryn Ellis / Datacom

Summary of Day 1: October 3rd

Regenerative Practitioner Workshop

This meeting was facilitated by Freya Yost and Ben Haggard. All frameworks, exercises, and content was created by Ben Haggard.

Exercise I: Qualitative Characteristics Exercise

IDENTIFYING PATTERNS

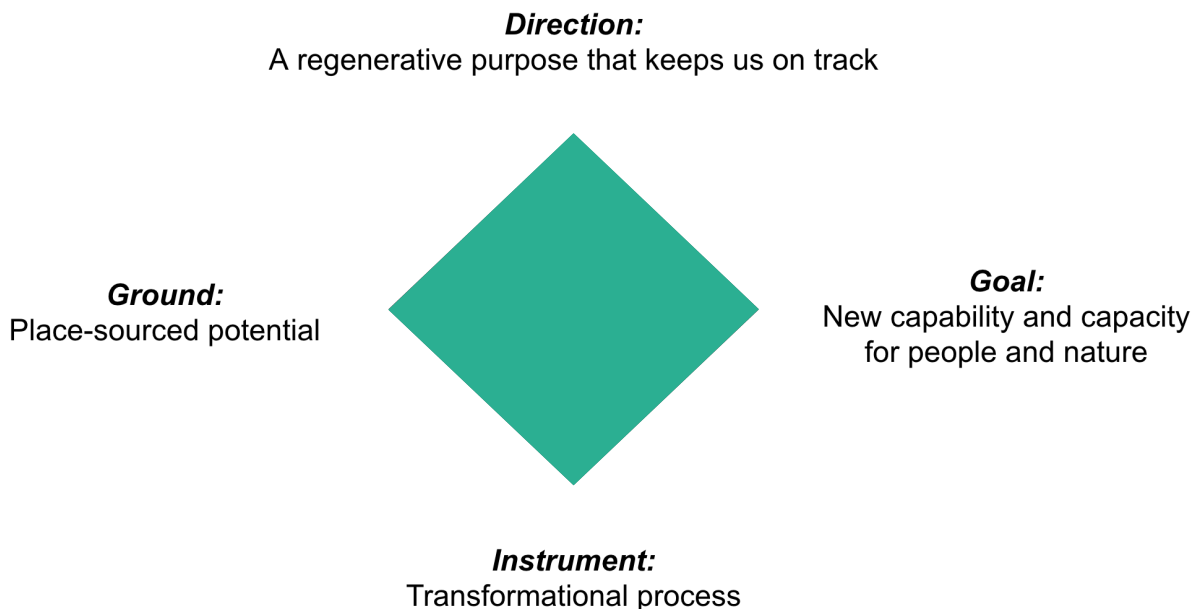
After hearing presentations from projects in Dominica, Kiribati, and New Zealand, participants were asked the following questions with the aim of identifying patterns.

- How are these projects anchored in the distinctiveness of their respective places? How do their approaches reflect these differences?
- How did community engagement with these projects build local capability and capacity? What difference is this likely to make in the future?
- Are there aspects of the processes used by these projects that stood out to you as being especially effective? Especially transformative?
- In the case of each project, what larger system was it aiming to help regenerate? What role did this regenerative purpose play in aligning and activating stakeholders?

Exercise II: Roadmapping Process Exercise

IMPROVING PROJECT ACTION PLANS

Participants divided into small groups to work on growing the potential of their projects. They were asked the following questions and given this framework:



- **Direction:** *What larger systems are we seeking to regenerate through this effort? How can this be framed or articulated so that it is meaningful to the diverse stakeholders who will need to be engaged? (You may find that it's helpful to touch back to these questions later in the conversation to see if your understanding has evolved.)*
- **Ground:** *What is the nature of the place and what does this tell us about its inherent potential? How could this project be evolved to more fully reflect and respond to the potential of the place?*
- **Goal:** *How can local communities use this project to strengthen their innate leadership, grow their capabilities, and nourish their capacity for wisdom? What about growing the capacity of local ecosystems? What changes in capability and capacity might we expect if we make this part of our intention?*
- **Instrument:** *What are the current patterns that will need to be transformed if a community is to manifest the potential and purpose it has identified for this project? What sort of process will be required? What resources will need to be assembled?*

Exercise III: Working Group Exercise

IDENTIFYING GAPS & BARRIERS

- *Briefly confirm the arena being addressed by this working group. Why is it important?*
- *In this arena, what are the key restraints that the world is facing with regard to being able to work at a regenerative level? How do these restraints show up in the specific projects that you were working on earlier?*
- *Based on these first two questions, develop a statement of purpose for this working group.*
- *How will communities and stakeholders be engaged? If possible, capture these ideas in the form of working principles.*
- *Where appropriate, identify next steps for this working group.*

Outcomes of Workshop

- Participants emerged with a stronger understanding of the unique characteristics and patterns of regenerative projects.
- Projects gained a better understanding of how to strengthen, amplify and scale the impact of their initiatives in concrete action and delivery plans.
- Projects mapped interconnected systems influencing their work and in doing so were able to determine new stakeholders to involve.
- Working groups articulated the purpose of their groups and identified next steps to support infrastructure-level transformations.

- Participants agreed to document case studies and make them available on the Regenerative Learning Lab, a digital collaboration between Cloudburst, Common Earth and the Commonwealth Secretariat
- Participants agreed to form Common Earth Alliance, a unity of diverse efforts to support systems change and the scaling of regenerative demonstration sites around the world

Conclusion

More information will be made available in the upcoming months. We are currently working on a comprehensive report with the Commonwealth Secretariat. Case studies can be seen on our website on the Regenerative Learning Lab digital initiative. Thank you again to our colleagues around the world who made the trip to London to support this regenerative development effort. We would also like to express our gratitude to the Commonwealth Secretariat for leading this pioneering climate change effort.

Thank you.

www.common.earth

www.cloudburstfoundation.org