

We live in extreme times. With every passing year, environmental degradation, resource depletion, social inequality, and violence loom larger. We are at an urgent crossroads, and the scope of our problems requires that we go beyond attempting to address this or that acute threat, and instead design a global governance model that can creatively respond to *any* such challenge.

For many millennia, humans have lived in collaborative societies, sharing resources with care for all life. Today, billions still depend on collaboratively managed commons for their daily living (e.g., the collectively managed acequias, or irrigation ditches, of the U.S. South.) Our research shows that when people have adequate social infrastructure to collaborate on solving the problems that affect them, they are capable of making sustainable choices: while true collaboration in which everyone wins is not necessarily easy, ample evidence exists that it is possible.

However, at this time current global governance institutions and power structures, at worst, are exacerbating existing threats to our survival. At best, they are unable to decisively address these threats, instead prioritizing short-term gains for the few at cost to the many, including other life forms and the regenerative capacity of the earth. We have determined that a mechanism to ascertain input from the majority of the world's population would counteract these unsustainable outcomes. And for our planetary success, we assert that such a mechanism is imperative.

Accordingly, we propose the Local to Global Collaboration (LGC) model of global governance. The inspirations for this model are numerous, including archeological evidence about pre-patriarchal societies, indigenous practices such as those carried out by the Iroquois Nation, and more recent examples of participatory self-governance such as those employed in Catalunya during the Spanish Civil War, and in present-day Rojava. Based on our social evolutionary gift of collaborating in small groups, the LGC model scales this small-group building block into a large, highly interconnected decision-making platform by weaving local and global levels of autonomy. The resulting system offers innovative pathways for decision-making that are agile enough to attend to global conditions without overlooking local ones.

Structure and Institutional Principles

Complete implementation of the LGC model includes several different kinds of decision-making circles based on the degree of controversy, complexity, and power dynamics present in the issue at hand:

- *Local-to-Global Coordinating Circles* address routine decisions for which there is general trust and clarity. These start with neighborhoods or villages and coalesce in concentric circles that remain locally accountable. To prevent the accumulation of power, all who represent circles rotate out of their positions after some time and can be recalled by their local circle.
- *Ad-Hoc Randomly Selected Circles* address more complex problems that require significant research and deliberation. While bringing their expertise, people enter the circle as individuals: they do not represent any role or group.

- *Ad-Hoc Multi-Stakeholder Circles* address issues with a high degree of controversy, power differences, or mistrust. Those invited to a Multi-Stakeholder circle occupy their public role and advocate for needs and perspectives that arise within that role. Addressing climate change would be a prime example of such a circle. In this example, an integrative solution would require at least the presence of the CEOs of energy companies, acutely affected communities (e.g., Pacific Islanders,) climate activists, politicians, scientists. Such a comprehensive group, when reaching a solution that all members can embrace in the paradigm of the LGC model, is likely to carry sufficient moral authority to sway the entire global population.

Though it will likely facilitate a cultural shift, the LGC model embeds transformative values and principles into institutions; no individuals need become saints for it to be efficient. Based on our practice-based experience, processes that engage these principles lead to solutions that are willingly accepted by all. Over time, we've seen that consciousness changes through practice, and that participants ultimately increase their collaborative capacity, in tandem with their trust in the system.

LGC Institutional principles include:

- Each circle will be supplied with highly trained facilitators to support participants to hear themselves and each other; to identify together what's most important and relevant as criteria for the decision at stake; and to find solutions that will attend to all that's important through mutual influencing.
- Dissent will be invited and engaged with to integrate all concerns
- In addition to a commitment to unanimous decisions, all circles are empowered to make decisions rather than recommendations.
- Each component of the system will engage self-management and have resource independence, allowing for self-responsibility and flexibility.
- Every step of decision making is to be transparent.

Timeline and Design Principles

Given the gap between current global governance and the design of this model, a complex transition will be necessary as, metaphorically, we will be replacing the engine of a plane in mid-air. Our research-based estimation is that, if committed to either by the United Nations or another group that carries sufficient moral authority, the LGC governance model would effect positive impacts in its first year, and would take fifteen to thirty years to fully implement. The general unfolding of the transition is based on the following design principles:

- Begin simultaneously at the local and global levels.
- Collaborate as possible with current global governance structures such as the the UN, nation states, corporations, and global leaders.
- Gradual building of systems and infrastructure:
 - Build trust through engagement of global Ad Hoc Multi-Stakeholder Circles to address the most complex and controversial issues.

- Increasingly strengthen Local-To-Global Coordinating Circles to coalesce and expand first into Regional Coordinating Circles, and eventually into a Global Coordinating Circle.
- Employ mass-training around the world in facilitation, conflict resolution, and nonviolent peacekeeping.

Growing theoretical and empirical research continues to challenge assumptions that human nature is inherently selfish. We have consistently seen that when the conditions are created for collective human wisdom to emerge, it does. In this spirit, we look forward to our collaborative future.