

**Meeting the  
Climate Challenge**

Chapter Six

# Shaping a Compassionate World

Building social justice through teaching social and emotional literacy to preschool children to advance cooperation, collaboration and common purpose in meeting the climate crisis and pursuing better human and planetary outcomes.

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# Executive Summary

Can we find a way through the planet's existential crises—climate emergency, pollution, biodiversity loss—with the mindset and thinking that has brought us to a broken world?

In this chapter of Meeting the Climate Challenge, we consider how to bring about the shift in attitudes needed to mitigate and adapt to the climate crisis, while pursuing inclusive climate resilience that leaves no one behind.

While the other chapters of our book describe tools and practical solutions, this chapter is an open embrace of utopian thinking. It flies in the face of the sadness and misery that afflict the lives of much of humankind. It is an unabashed celebration of the possibilities that await, rooted in the deep experience of the societies that have come before us.

Its key recommendation is to teach social and emotional learning as an essential foundation of education, along with literacy and numeracy. We explore the work of Think Equal, an initiative with a comprehensive global ambition to infuse children in every culture with shared values that lead to better human and planetary outcomes.

We hope we are perceived as practical utopians, because we firmly believe we can heal a broken world.

Our goal—one that may not be reached within a lifetime, but is worth pursuing nonetheless—is one that offers a way to address our existential crisis. A future where all humans live together, enjoying freedom from fear and freedom from want, in community, with dignity, and in harmony with one another and the natural world.

We ask you to grant us an open mind and an open heart as you consider the ideas we present in this chapter. And we sincerely hope that you will feel able to join us on our journey.

## Recommendations: Our call to action

1. Children aged three to six should have access to social and emotional learning as a compulsory new subject on preschool curricula around the world.
1. Within their own cultural contexts, all nations should commit to adding social and emotional learning as a third essential element to accompany literacy and numeracy.
1. Governments should commit to social justice and inclusive societal development if we are to face the climate crisis and other imminent challenges with a common purpose, common ground and a common dedication both to humankind and to our biosphere.
1. Proceeds from the Global Carbon Levy (Chapter One) and the diagnoses produced by The Digital Economist's 6-D lens (Chapter Two) should be applied across the Global South to ensure universal access to social and emotional learning for children.









# Introduction

*"Education does not transform the world. Education changes people. People change the world." - Paulo Freire*

Rampant pollution, the climate crisis and mass extinction continue to consume our planet.

And where are we? Are we able to find the resources, the will and the common resolve we need to address the triple crisis?

Clearly not.

In the face of this existential crisis, where science differs only on the extent and scope of the catastrophe already upon us, our best collective efforts aren't good enough.

We need a new kind of global citizen. Citizens brought up in love. Who cannot stay indifferent in the face of wrong. Who are able to convene, collaborate, cooperate and converge in shaping a world that works for everyone.

Such citizens exist, but they are the few, not the many.

How do we make more of them? This is the existential challenge that faces us as we embark on a journey to find common ground and common purpose to cope with catastrophic climate change.

The most daunting obstacle, if we are to unwind the attitudes that have brought us to a broken world, is the politics of division and fear. We need to unlearn these reflexes and look deeply within ourselves and among ourselves to rediscover the roots of compassion, the roots of empathy, the roots of our common humanity.

We should be fully aware that unlearning is the most challenging part of the journey. Yet, as Bob Marley told us in his great secular anthem of redemption, "emancipate yourselves from mental slavery, none but ourselves can free our minds."

Is this fruitless idealism in a broken world rife with inequity? Perhaps so. Yet we would argue that our destination is within sight, if not immediately within reach: a future where all humans live together, enjoying freedom from fear and freedom from want, in community, with dignity, and in harmony with one another and with the natural world.

This is what it means to enjoy human rights as a way of life, through the full flowering of our right to be human. And this is the shift we need as we face the triple planetary crisis of climate emergency, pollution and biodiversity loss. The following essential human rights, loosely reflecting the UN Declaration of Human Rights, provide a solid basis:

Freedom from fear: this is a place beyond the culture of violence that has infected us throughout our recorded history. Indeed, the absence of fear is the foundation of a community life that brings out the best in us.

Freedom from want: this is more than the basics of food, shelter and clothing. It is the fulfillment of the culture all our spiritual traditions impart to us; a place suffused with the grace and power of mutual love and support.

Living together in community, with dignity: this is the destination that should in fact be our human birthright. Nurtured in social justice, informed with empathy and compassion, and infused with love. In a sense, a polar opposite of the life endured by much of humankind today.

Living together in harmony with one another and the natural world: this aspect of the journey must take us past, through and beyond what we believe to be the limits of the possible; to discover in the Other the perfect echo of ourselves. This is an indispensable foundation to meeting the triple planetary crisis, recalling our duty of care and our stewardship of the planet.

The Capability Approach, first put forward by Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen and expanded on by philosopher Martha Nussbaum, takes the concept of universal human rights a step further. It is defined by its choice of focus upon the moral significance of individuals' capability to achieve the kind of lives they have reason to value. With a focus on choice and dignity, a person's capability to live a good life is defined in terms of the set of valuable "beings and doings," like being in good health or having loving relationships with others to which they have real access. Each individual is free to realize or not realize a given capability.

The following core capabilities form the basis of the approach:

1. Individual physiology, such as the variations associated with illnesses, disability, age and gender. In order to achieve the same functionings, people may have particular needs for non-standard commodities—such as prosthetics for a disability—or they may need more of the standard commodities—such as additional food in the case of intestinal parasites. Note that some of these disadvantages, such as blindness, may not be fully "correctable" even with tailored assistance.
1. Local environment diversities, such as climate, epidemiology and pollution. These can impose particular costs, such as more or less expensive heating or clothing requirements.
1. Variations in social conditions, such as the provision of public services like education and security, and the nature of community relationships, for example across class or ethnic divisions.

4. Differences in relational perspectives. Conventions and customs determine the commodity requirements of expected standards of behavior and consumption, so that relative income poverty in a rich community may translate into absolute poverty in the space of capability. For example, local requirements concerning “the ability to appear in public without shame” in terms of acceptable clothing may vary widely.
5. Distribution within the family—distributional rules within a family determining, for example, the allocation of food and health care between children and adults, males and females.

The Capability Approach is significant, considering that—above all—in addressing inequality and striving for social justice, our journey must take us from the relationship of dependency inherent in charity to the self-sufficiency of dignity. Instead of striving to be the best in the world, we will explore how to be the best for the world.

This is the path of pursuing human rights together, as a shared way of life. One that strives to include all, leaving no one behind. This is the mindset we need to evoke, to nurture, to grow, if we are to find workable solutions to the planetary crisis. To see the world as it is—consumed by division, avarice, narrow pursuits of self-interest—is to despair that this ideal is within grasp and within sight. One of our best hopes lies in shaping the thinking of future generations, to give us a path to an inclusive future.

We can do so by starting early. In every country, in every community. Ensuring children are raised to remain kind and loving, before they can be taught to hate.

One promising path forward is offered by Think Equal. On the pages that follow, The Digital Economist and Think Equal share our common vision for better human and planetary outcomes. This thought leadership is offered as a new way of being and belonging as we shape the future citizens who inherit an imperiled planet.



## Convening A Path To Resilience

The Digital Economist seeks to unite the fruits of Think Equal (socially and emotionally literate children who will grow up to be empathetic and engaged adults) with the human and planetary challenges brought into sharper focus by The Digital Economist's 6-D lens.

*“Give me a child until he is seven and I will show you the man.”—Aristotle*

Based on the importance of impressions formed in the mind in the first few years of life, Think Equal's curriculum is aimed at three- to six-year-olds, structured in three age-appropriate levels, with 90 lesson plans, 24 narrative picture books and 50+ resource materials at each age level. Institutions delivering the program—classrooms, daycare centers, crèches and an array of other non-school settings—get three half-hour units of instruction per week. All learning is tangible and in granular detail.

[Think Equal](#) works in public-private partnerships. For jurisdictions with preschool and junior kindergarten programs as part of the school system, the partnership is generally with local education authorities to ensure sustainability.

It emphasizes social and emotional literacy for social justice, mediating gender equality, racial equality, economic equity, human rights and human dignity.

The scientific basis of the Think Equal approach is to co-create pro-social neural pathways in the developing brains of children. This is precisely why the targeted age group of the intervention is during that optimal window of opportunity to modify the development of the brain.

For instance, Think Equal's curriculum material shows children that the human skin pigmentation is brown, ranging from very pale to very dark. It does so by showing faces against a pure white background, so children can see the difference. This simple yet powerful tool shapes thinking at the most impressionable age. And it paves the way to accepting that skin color is a superficial characteristic and that all humans are inherently worthy, deserving respect and mutuality.

One other facet of development during this phase (up to age seven), which may be critical to the wellbeing of humanity and the planet, is physiognomic perception.

[Physiognomic perception as defined by Heinz Werner in the 1930s](#) refers to the tendency to perceive and experience the world through the lens of emotional and motor qualities, endowing people, animals, nature and inanimate things with expressive characteristics. Werner held that this antedates an anthropomorphic tendency to



project human characteristics onto inanimate objects and refers to a deep perception of emotion and physicality—an embedded empathetic perception of the world.

For example, children may perceive a tree or a river or living creatures as having emotions (e.g., an angry sky, a sad snake, a sleepy river). This ability has a tendency to diminish after the age of seven unless it is fostered.

Many practices of indigenous peoples and wisdom traditions incorporate this, regarding the natural world with much more reverence. Perhaps fostering this reverence would extend our care, lifting up instincts to empathize with other humans around us in the world. Consciously fostering this ability in early childhood and beyond could potentially lead to greater reverence and care for the wellbeing of the Earth and all of its inhabitants.

[Think Equal is designed to accompany numeracy and literacy as a critical third pillar to early years education.](#) The Digital Economist and Think Equal believe that engaged, empathetic and globally minded citizens need to be shaped—they do not arise by accident.

There is an element here of deradicalization, in overcoming ingrained biases of cultural superiority if not supremacy, often tied to economic power, and too often expressed as extensions of patriarchal and phallographic societal structures. As such, perhaps the further success of this program becomes a doorway for traditional education curricula publishers to review the narrow cultural and social representations included in current textbooks and educational materials.

Specifically looking to our agenda for better human and planetary outcomes, The Digital Economist and Think Equal want to shape the sort of citizens and leaders that the planet is going to need if we are to face the climate crisis and other imminent challenges with a common purpose, common ground and a common dedication both to humankind and to our biosphere.



## The Origins of Think Equal

*"No one is born hating another person because of the color of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite." – Nelson Mandela*

Leslee Udwin's documentary, *India's Daughter*, sheds light on the sociocultural context in which sexualized violence takes place, focusing on the brutal gang rape of a medical student on a moving bus in Delhi. In her work on the project as a co-author, she discovered that biases in many forms—including racial, ethnic, religious, class-based, caste, sexist or any other—exist in all societies.

The root cause of this violence was sociocultural programming of inequality, which ascribes lesser value and different rules to other human beings, in this case based on gender. Understanding that all inequalities—racial, religious, ethnic or any other—spring from the same root cause, and that the only way to change the discriminatory mindset is through education, Leslee began a journey in exploring what education is and discovering what it should be. Leslee concluded that there is a missing third dimension to education: social and emotional learning, which must be taught alongside numeracy and literacy.

Think Equal is a global initiative that calls for a systemic change in education, to end the discriminatory mindset and the cycle of violence across our world and ensure positive life outcomes for children. Rakel Dink, who became involved in human rights activism following the tragic assassination of her husband, the prominent Turkish-Armenian journalist Hrant Dink, observed:

*"Whatever would be the age of the murderers, 17 or 27, I know that they were born babies once. Without questioning the darkness that created murderers from those babies, there's nothing to do."*

Think Equal is the first global education initiative to introduce social and emotional intelligence learning to children in early years education between the ages of three and six. It aims to teach all children that all humans are equal and should be valued equally.

Think Equal wants to eliminate discrimination, disrespect and violence from the next generation, and put empathy, wellbeing, loving relationships and pro-social behaviors and attitudes in their place.

<sup>1</sup> <https://m.bianet.org/english/politics/90622-rakel-dinks-letter-to-the-loved-one>

Think Equal's mission is to achieve a global systemic change in education, introducing social and emotional learning as a new compulsory subject on national curricula around the world.

The new subject aims to teach children universal values of compassion, empathy and respect and also the key abilities of critical thinking, peaceful conflict resolution, citizenship and life skills. It aims to teach the program to every child aged three to six in every country in the world.

Think Equal believes that there is a “missing subject,” and that every child across the world has an inalienable right to be nurtured with values, life skills and competencies that enable healthy and positive life outcomes.

Essentially, we need to redefine success. This is a call to action: it is time to join hands and reimagine education to give our children a chance to have positive outcomes in life—to grow up loving themselves and one another regardless of religion, gender, ethnicity or economic background. We must bring value-based learning and social and emotional skills to the core of the education system.

The early childhood program of Think Equal in social and emotional learning, developed with global experts in the field, addresses inequity and proposes to advance human rights and sustainable human development that leaves no one behind. It aims to collaborate with governments and global actors to bring this early childhood development program successfully to scale.

It is important to acknowledge that this is the investment that can only come from the engagement of adults in this work—adults who hold the power and the responsibility in our current situation. “I believe the majority of adults truly want to lead with their hearts but are driven by fear—fear that allowing themselves to lead with their hearts will end in lack and loss,” says Leslee.

This then becomes a leap of faith—an invitation to the hearts of the adults who want connection. All human beings have five basic needs: safety, security, belonging, respect and love. Acknowledging and honoring these five basic needs becomes the driving force, providing motivation for the adults of our world (citizens and those that hold more power) to fulfill their deepest needs.

Love is the greatest equalizer: because every single human needs and wants this at the core. And this is the foundational truth in Think Equal's launch of a pilot program across 20 countries, including Sri Lanka, Canada, the UK, Botswana, Mexico, North Macedonia, Spain, Australia, India, Pakistan, South Africa and the USA.

## Think Equal Social and Emotional Learning Program

Neuroscientists agree that the optimal time to change mindsets, attitudes and behaviors is in the early years. Think Equal's social and emotional learning program cultivates empathy and emotional intelligence. Instilling these values in the earliest years will contribute to the next generation of just, inclusive, empathetic and altruistic leaders, teachers and professionals—global citizens that can rise to the challenges of the 21st century.

Think Equal has developed comprehensive and holistic programmatic tools in the field of early childhood education. The program has been developed by academic luminaries such as [Sir Ken Robinson](#), [Dr. Urvashi Sahni](#), [Barbara Isaacs](#) from Montessori UK, and [Dr. Marc Brackett](#) and [Dr. Robin Stern](#) from the [Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence](#), who evaluate the program's impact.

Think Equal gives children the foundation for positive outcomes in life by equipping them with the tools that are critical to living a life in dignity and in respect of the dignity of others. It teaches them 25 competencies, values and skills, including empathy, emotional literacy, self-regulation, gender equality, critical thinking, self-esteem, inclusion, problem solving, collaboration and resilience.

In essence, it is a vaccination against discrimination, selfishness and negative behavior.







# The Deep Roots Of Inclusive Societal Development

societal development: a society that acknowledges, welcomes and celebrates the diversity of all cultures and origins. Inclusion is a philosophy of oneness that values the life of each and every being irrespective of caste, creed, race, gender, language, region, religion, ability or disability.

As with the other chapters in *Meeting the Climate Challenge*, we look for the threads that bind humanity in common aspiration. In a world of imposed will, when even the quest for human dignity is seen as carrying a cultural bias, we note that the “Western” concept of human rights draws from deeper wells of human experience.

The revolutions that gave rise to Republican France, the United States and what is broadly called liberal democracy began with the Swiss philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Rousseau placed the collective benefit of society far above the individual pursuit of self-fulfillment, which would by nature be seen as selfish. Rousseau considered “*le bien commun*,” or the common good, as the highest aspiration of any organized society.

This thinking formed the basis of today’s pursuit of inclusive societal development, wherein inclusion means that no one is left behind in seeking better human and planetary outcomes.

Yet this was not a novel thought. Rousseau’s 18th century thinking was shaped by classical Greek philosophers, particularly Aristotle, who spoke of the common interest. And in an echo of thinking that spanned cultures, Rousseau’s notion of the common good flowed from the Chinese notions of societal harmony, as advocated by Taoist philosophy. Twenty-five centuries before our time, Lao Tzu laid the foundations of Taoism, which has been revived today as a revered philosophical example by the current leadership of the Communist Party of China.

The Digital Economist believes the Think Equal approach is essential to building inclusive Lao Tzu was the head librarian of the royal library at Luoyan, and with his disciple Kong Qiu (who became known as Master Kong or Kong Fuzi, romanized to Confucius) advocated looking within oneself and knowing oneself as the beginning of meaningful participation in community life.

In the 81 cryptic verses of his Tao Te Ching, Lao Tzu wrote about the cardinal virtues of harmonious life: be kind, be gentle, be supportive and revere all life. These virtues are the foundation of the Taoist catechism, which has been embraced as a way of living by people in different societies and cultures across the world:

*If there is to be peace in the world,  
There must be peace in the nations.  
If there is to be peace in the nations,  
There must be peace in the cities.  
If there is to be peace in the cities,  
There must be peace between neighbors.  
If there is to be peace between neighbors,  
There must be peace in the home.  
If there is to be peace in the home,  
There must be peace in the heart.*

The foundations laid by Lao Tzu for societies shaped by peace, order and good governance negate the sneers of tyrants that human rights are a “Western” concept which began with Rousseau and the revolution-forged evolution that produced what is called liberal democracy. In fact, there were foundational laws long before Rousseau which can rightly be classified as constitutions that proclaimed and upheld human rights on a foundation of good governance, respect, mutual responsibilities, and individual and collective rights.

Indeed, one can credibly assert that the first modern human rights framework was the [Kurukan Fuga constitution of 1235](#), in the Mandingo Empire, which is largely represented today in the west-central African nation of Mali. Recognized as part of the intangible cultural heritage of humankind by the United Nations, the [Manden Charter](#) at the heart of the Kurukan Fuga evokes and embodies what are recognizably modern human rights.

These include an affirmation of societal peace and order in diversity, dignity arising from the inviolability of the human being, the human right to education, creating nationhood by upholding the integrity of the motherland, establishing food security as a foundational human right, freedom of expression, freedom of trade and, above all, the abolition of enslavement.

Yet the roots of inclusive societal development are even deeper. More than 2,300 years ago, the Indian emperor Ashoka, sickened by the slaughter in his brutal wars of conquest, abandoned war and declared non-violence to be the highest aspiration of any meaningful life. These edicts were [inscribed in stone](#) (in Greek and in Aramaic, to accommodate his subjects in northwestern India) in every reach of the empire, from what is today [Kandahar in Afghanistan](#) to the Dhauli hill near [Bhubaneswar in ancient Kalinga](#) (eastern India).

Ashoka’s edicts established the human right to healthcare, the human right to religious freedom, social relations based on respect and mutuality, and an evocation of universal love and understanding.

It is worth noting that the Ashokan path did not bind his successors, nor did it change the many years of India’s history in which casteism, exclusion and inequity continued to flourish. Yet even today, these ancient pursuits of inclusive societal development remain a benchmark of how social justice can be pursued.



All of these ancient traditions of social justice are echoed and find resonance in the Think Equal curriculum: a return to the human values with which we are born, before the adult world teaches children hatred, intolerance, grievance and the other corrosive elements of cultures of resentment.

Just as the common good is the surrender of absolute individual freedom for the common benefit of society, so is collective wealth an evocation of what all of us collectively own. From stewardship of the natural world to the modern infrastructure of schools, hospitals, roads, railways and ports, collective wealth is in essence the assets that support the common good.

This symbiosis of shared wealth and the common good was first expounded by Kautilya—which may well have been a nom de plume for Chanakya, prime minister to Chandragupta Maurya, ruler of the Mauryan Empire that flourished 2,300 years before our time, spanning a territory that includes much of today's Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, parts of Central Asia and all but the southern tip of the Indian subcontinent, and extending east to modern Myanmar and southwestern China.

Kautilya's book *Arthashastra*, or the Art of Statecraft, envisioned 2,300 years ago what we would regard as the modern welfare state. The duty of kingship, he noted, is to recognize that the monarchy exists to serve the state and the people living within it: to encourage productive economies, collect taxes and spread the benefits of taxation in support of a better life for citizens.

To overcome perceptions of bias, particularly the divergence of systems of governance, perhaps our measure of inclusive societal development ought to be set against a common standard:

- Do citizens have a meaningful opportunity to engage in the development and day-to-day governance of their society?
- Are the building blocks of a clement life—universal access to education, universal access to healthcare, economic opportunity that provides a living wage—readily available to most, if not all?
- Is there a safe means of offering constructive criticism, of advancing ideas and discussions on how best to shape the collective future?
- And above all, is there a safe and accessible path to citizen engagement to ensure that inclement changes are not imposed on the many by the few?

The common good and collective wealth need active citizen engagement if they are to be nurtured and shaped to serve social and economic justice. Currently, we have fewer than six in ten voters actually casting a ballot in most democratic elections (save those few nations with mandatory voting)—a level of participation too low to drive positive change.

Rather than a debate about the relative merits of one particular social system or another, we need to muster the actual consent of those we purport to represent if we are to achieve meaningful societal transformation. Looking beyond our own community and national boundaries, the greater challenge is to advance the common good and our collective wealth among those of our sisters and brothers who live in societies emerging from war and conflict. This is an essential role that can be filled by the children of Think Equal as they grow to adulthood and take stewardship of our common future.

The convergence of mission and vision between The Digital Economist and Think Equal foresees that, with our efforts, the compassionate citizens nurtured will pursue freedom from fear and freedom from want for an ever-larger proportion of humankind.

The quest to establish and foster non-violence, when “free societies” are themselves among the greatest enablers of violence, is the challenge that faced Gandhi, King and Mandela in their time.

As change agents, it also becomes our challenge.







# The Promise And Potential Of An Inclusive Future

We have learned to enhance the common good and collective wealth in advocating a sustainable biosphere, asserting gender equity, practicing and embracing a pluralistic and inclusive society which values diversity as a strength and speaking out against injustice—whether it prevails in our own communities or in the wider world.

Nonetheless, we have thus far been unable to change the attitude of those with power.

This is where we see the immense value that children will bring to the uncertain future they inherit, through the social-emotional learning imparted by programs like Think Equal. We know that the quest for civil society remains a work in progress, because changing the attitude of those who hold power is seldom done with ease.

The gift of human rights, among those of us who live in societies committed to supporting our autonomy and agency to participate meaningfully in the life of our polity, also comes with a human responsibility: to navigate towards a future where all can seek the education, the economic security and the empowerment to exercise our right to be human.

And in the communities of mutual interest that manifest themselves in everything from global climate strikes to marches against injustice, you yourself can pursue an ample role in establishing a just society, anchored in the dominion of love.

The Digital Economist's leadership in the [emerging dominion of Web3](#), which enables people to create, control and establish ownership of the digital world, is an immense opportunity to empower ordinary people to shape their own destiny. We are using our leadership in Web3 to convene digital and physical communities where our daily lives are shaped and guided by the better angels of our nature. The experience is universal: something you can build in your own environs as you inspire others to be the best for the world rather than the best in the world.

The Digital Economist believes that in an ideal outcome, Web3 will accelerate the development of communities that choose to incorporate human rights into their everyday lives, to train and empower citizens to know their human rights in order to claim them.

This is an evolutionary process, not a revolutionary one, and it aims at collaboration and consensus to change the underlying values and attitudes that contribute to violence and misery.

In this regard, it differs from “code violation” monitoring like that performed by Amnesty International or Human Rights Watch, in that it looks for long-term changes in behavior, rather than the mere chronicling of breaches or violations of human rights. Rather than an imposition, the convergence of the digital and physical worlds for better human and planetary

outcomes evolves from within the community, accommodating its unique cultural norms and behaviors as well as its own approaches to consensus and coalition building.

The indispensable foundation is inclusive, participatory and responsive governance – especially when it comes to governance of digital realms. The Digital Economist's leadership in blockchain governance is focused on equity, inclusion and diversity. This notion of shared and equitable governance is found principally within, but not necessarily limited to, democracies. Even authoritarian political structures can accommodate meaningful and responsive governance, especially at the local or municipal level, outside of the broader aspirations of the nation-state.

More than participation and representation, the pursuit of participatory governance—whether in the physical or the digital worlds—is fundamentally about inclusion, i.e., the right to be fully included in the civic life of one's community, one's state or one's country.

How fully an individual citizen exercises the right to be included and to participate is at the citizen's own discretion, but the right cannot be denied.

Along with inclusion, the notion of pluralism is at the heart of democratic governance. This is the very act of overcoming “otherness,” of affirming that many streams of human experience and of the human condition can live together in dignity, under the rule of law, with diversity seen as a source of strength and resiliency.

A complete understanding of the obligations of pluralism and inclusion is essential to the healthy evolution of a meaningful and participatory democracy, in both the physical and digital worlds.

This is the goal of inclusive societal development: an endeavor to build human capacity, both individually and in communities, and to enable the blossoming of human potential.

And in answer to regimes that resist the imposition of “foreign values” and argue dictatorship is best suited to their societies, we should note that human rights are not a “foreign value” unless human dignity is a “foreign value.”

Finally, we evoke the thought that we may need to move away from a “contested” term like human rights and transmute it to “the right to be human.” This implies a birthright that exists beyond the ambit of legal codes, governments and governance, and speaks to the human birthright to live together in dignity and in community.

By embedding this context and framework for dialogue within, among and between individuals, collectives, institutions and even entire societies, we can together catalyze the creation of self-learning and self-realization, which will foster people's own tools for social and economic change. The goal is to engender societal, civic, economic and political changes to reclaim and secure the right to be human. This in turn creates happy, secure and productive citizens, living in stable and attractive communities. In the words of Nelson Mandela, developing “a new political culture based on human rights.”

## Advancing the Common Good and our Collective Wealth

We have learned to enhance the common good and collective wealth in advocating a sustainable biosphere, asserting gender equity, practicing and embracing a pluralistic and inclusive society which values diversity as a strength, and speaking out against injustice—whether it prevails in our own communities or in the wider world.

Nonetheless, we have thus far been unable to change the attitude of those with power. An entire generation shaped by the Think Equal curriculum may be the evolution we need to provoke change and make the difference we wish to see in the world.

We may need these young leaders, shaped by love and a commitment to social justice, to connect the better angels of our nature. By creating and nurturing shared values. By looking beyond our superficial differences to find what unites us, to rediscover the merits of cooperation, collaboration and shared purpose, to foster our collective wealth and the common good.

One of the very first myths we need to re-examine is the notion that agreement and consensus are necessary at every step for a sustainable future—that the “common purpose” essential to the common good and our collective wealth must carry an implicit unanimity. In fact, just as you can find multiple paths to the same destination, common purpose can be achieved by diverse means.

As one illustration, all Canadian politicians agree on the “common purpose” of statutory healthcare and that this health care should be comprehensive, universal, publicly administered, portable and accessible.

Within this common purpose, there is ample room for debate and disagreement: on the relative role of a purely public-sector provision of health care, or on whether the private sector should play a greater or lesser role. The Canadian system is predicated upon a choice for physicians: the option to be a salaried employee, or work as an independent contractor providing services through contracts with the publicly administered system.

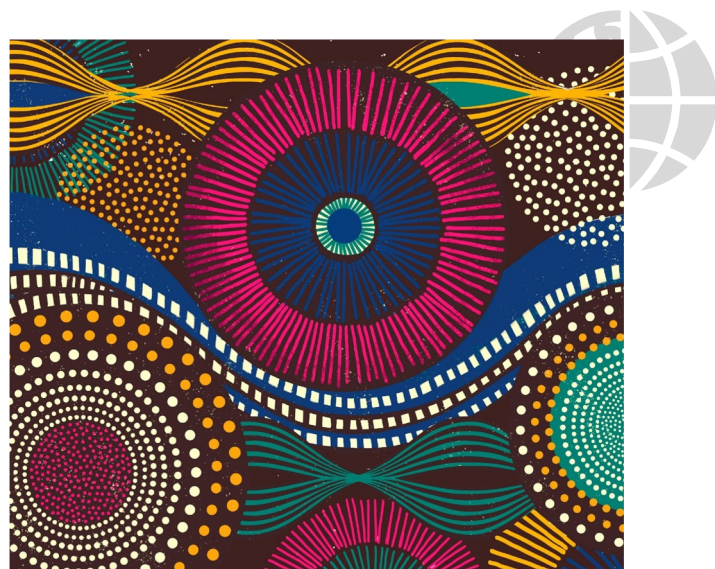
When we focus on common purpose and the common good, it becomes apparent that sustainability is about accommodating differences. It is about finding the compromises necessary so that people from very different backgrounds, raised with divergent experiences, each one's version of “truth” shaded by the perceptions that have shaped it, can find a way to share a society.

This is the difference between sustainable social cohesion and a “winner takes all” attitude in democratic elections, where the dominant political party or tribe rules to the exclusion of all other interests, until it is duly removed from office by another political tribe—or by armed force. The model of sustainable coexistence among many realities is really one of pluralism: a harmonious comingling that acknowledges and accommodates disagreement, and a continuous search for the tradeoffs we are willing to make, until we emerge with shared values.

In this vision, real sustainability comes from enabling all to participate meaningfully in their societies. By transcending division so that differences can be discussed and accommodated. To do so, we need to embed societal foundations that are both flexible and durable.

## Recommendations: our Call to Action

1. Children aged three to six should have access to social and emotional learning as a compulsory new subject on preschool curricula around the world.
2. Within their own cultural contexts, all nations should commit to adding social and emotional learning as a third essential element to accompany literacy and numeracy.
3. Governments should commit to social justice and inclusive societal development if we are to face the climate crisis and other imminent challenges with a common purpose, common ground and a common dedication both to humankind and to our biosphere.
4. Proceeds from the Global Carbon Levy (Chapter One) and the diagnoses produced by The Digital Economist's 6-D lens (Chapter Two) should be applied across the Global South to ensure universal access to social and emotional learning for children.







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