



Naia Trust

Earth-Centred Consciousness

Sensemaking 2024–2026

September 2026

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Letter from our founder

Have you ever taken refuge in nature? Has the Earth ever been your mentor or confidante? Do you belong to a wider community of planetary life?

If you've found resonance with these provocations, you've landed amongst friends here. It's often spoken of today amongst change-making circles that a transformation of our fundamental paradigms, "the evolution of human consciousness", is the necessary prerequisite for navigating the great challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. At Naia Trust we agree with this perspective. Form follows consciousness, and our solutions will only be as resilient and intelligent as the soul they emerge from. We also believe that this obligate shift in consciousness doesn't stop at the boundary of the human skin.

Almost three years ago, our team set out to research the current landscape of "Earth-Centred" Consciousness. Why "Earth-Centered"? What distinguishes this inquiry from other fields of consciousness studies (for example those of neuroscience, transpersonal psychology, contemplative science, or the wellbeing industries) is our consistent orientation toward consciousness in relationality with the Earth as the bedrock of any practice or approach.

Much of today's Western solutionism, whether in ecological or social change, orients with a strange numbness toward this relationship. Other species appear as assets. Resources. Inputs. A backdrop for the drama of human unfolding. Our landscapes are desacralised and de-animated, stripped of voice and soul.



Yet human consciousness unfolded over millennia, developing, germinating, intertwining with a living world that was the compass and map we drew upon for survival, the tinder for our fires, and the dew on our lips. Our Homo sapiens brains, our neuronal pathways, jolted and fused and tenderly sprouted new branches every time our eyes scanned the complexity of a living world, trying to make sense of its miraculous expressions. We were built, shattered, rebuilt, and humbled within a human story and an Earth story that contained and transcended our own. It included other species and ecosystems as protagonists, collaborators and kin.

Becoming fully human was never a solo act. Nature and soul not only depend on each other, but long for each other, and are of the same substance like twins or trees sharing the same taproot. Any enduring transition cannot ignore this instinctive and glorious embeddedness in the more-than-human world, and indeed, must center re-embedding us into that relationship of interbeing. Otherwise, “inner development” sealed inside the human self, without any connection to the wider web of life, risks becoming a self referential project, an anthropocentric hall of mirrors, lacking in grounded wisdom and holistic vision.

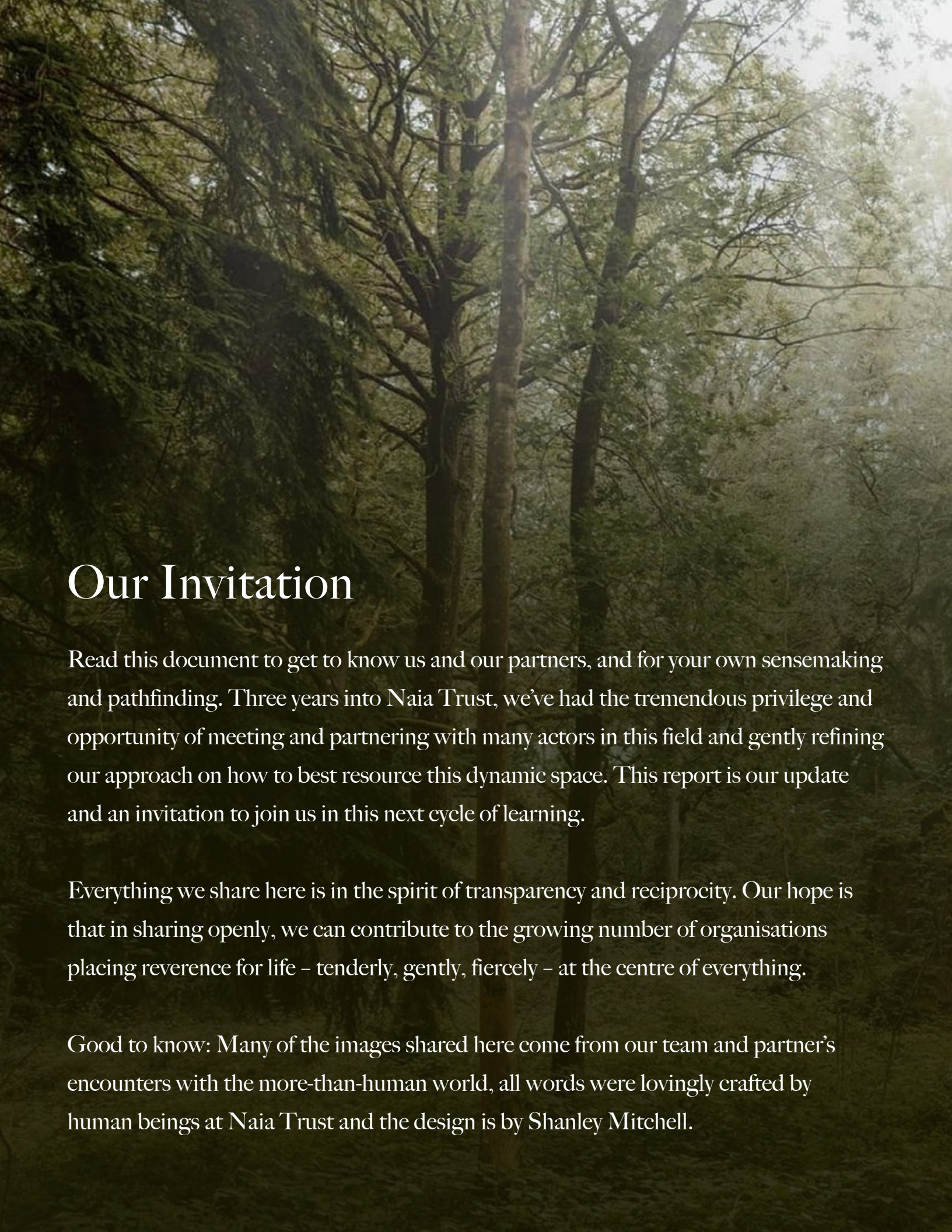
And so at Naia Trust we ask how a shift in Earth-Centred consciousness and inner transformation can be nurtured, and how reconnecting with the living world cascades outwards to become a tangible force of healing in the world – into the regeneration of vibrant landscapes, the cultivation of true *communitas*, and cultural renewal... And how these very same acts are the conduits for healing, in a virtuous cycle of reciprocity. We back the people and practices doing groundbreaking work at the illusory boundary between humans and nature precisely because that is where our deepest crises, and our deepest possibilities, lie.

This work is fundamentally a call to the sacred.

We are asked as a species to embark on a profound and intense spiritual transformation, an initiation that if we allow it to, will blaze to the core of who and what we are. It seems everything is being rewritten. What lies on the other side of that - and what is already here in pockets and bright points of light - could be utterly and devastatingly beautiful.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Alexa Firmenich". The script is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping initial 'A'.

Founder and Principal, Naia Trust

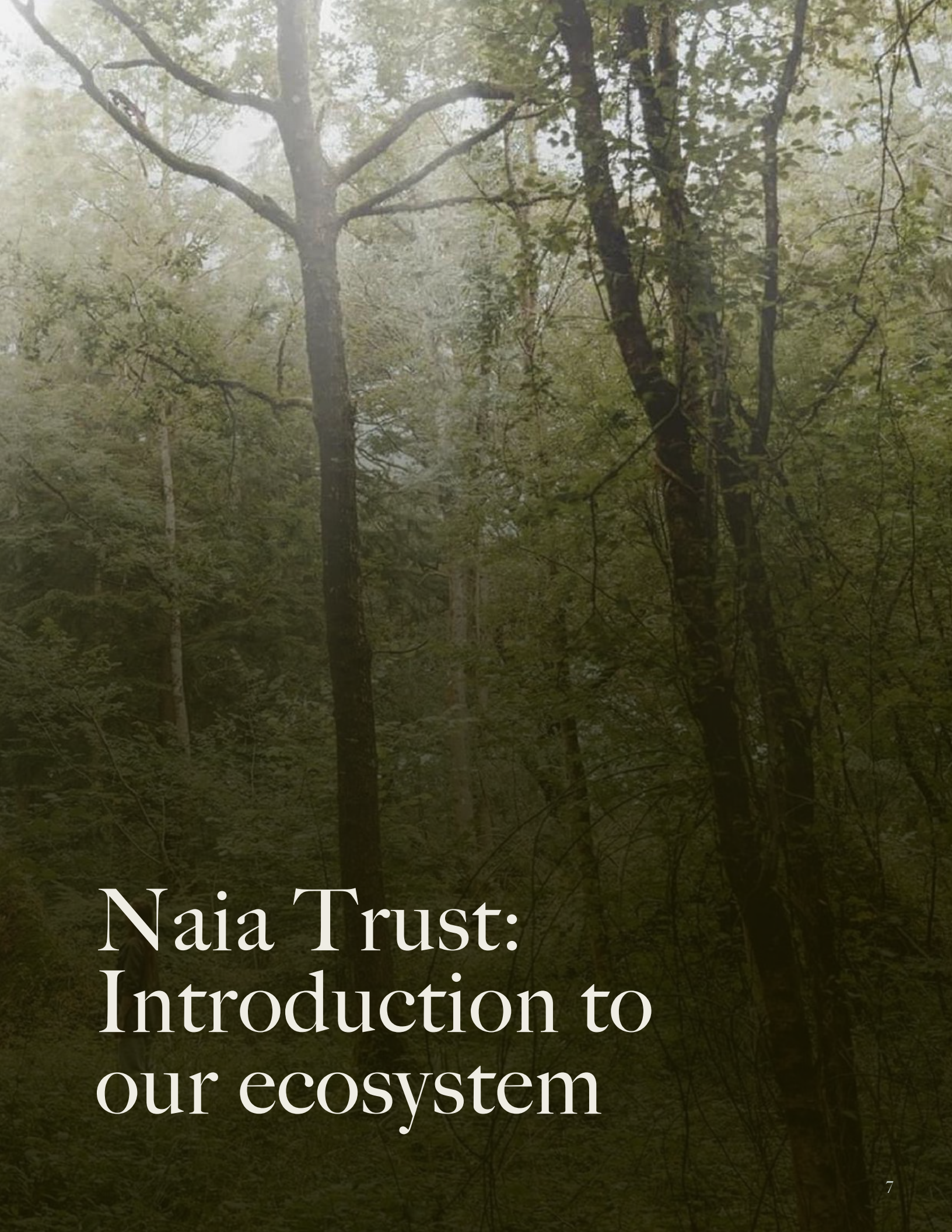


Our Invitation

Read this document to get to know us and our partners, and for your own sensemaking and pathfinding. Three years into Naia Trust, we've had the tremendous privilege and opportunity of meeting and partnering with many actors in this field and gently refining our approach on how to best resource this dynamic space. This report is our update and an invitation to join us in this next cycle of learning.

Everything we share here is in the spirit of transparency and reciprocity. Our hope is that in sharing openly, we can contribute to the growing number of organisations placing reverence for life – tenderly, gently, fiercely – at the centre of everything.

Good to know: Many of the images shared here come from our team and partner's encounters with the more-than-human world, all words were lovingly crafted by human beings at Naia Trust and the design is by Shanley Mitchell.

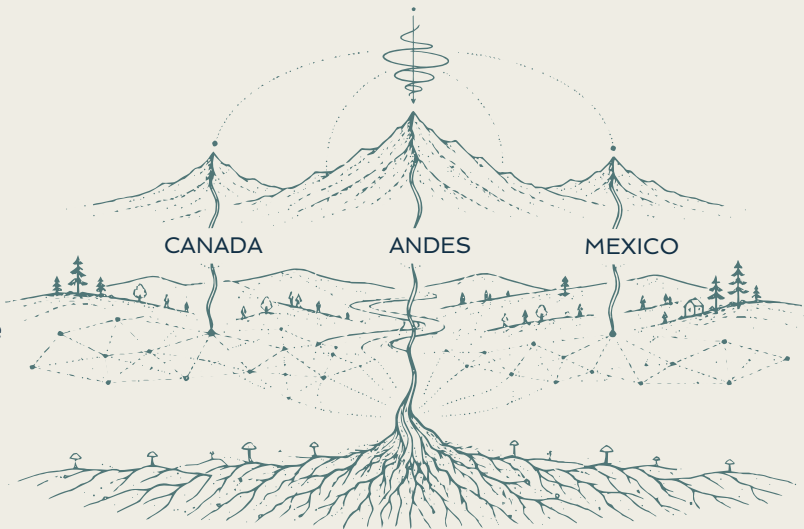


Naia Trust: Introduction to our ecosystem

Integrated Funding Approach

ECONOMIC & POLITICAL SYSTEMS

- Ecological economics
- Natural capital accounting
- Financial innovation
- Litigation and triage
- Commons governance



LIVING LANDSCAPES

- Bioeconomies & regenerative agriculture
- Large-scale restoration
- Protected areas & wildlife corridors
- Nature tech
- Commons architecture
- Capacity building / technical assistance
- Hydrological security
- Scientific research

RETURN TO EARTH

- Rites of passage
- Grief work & ritual
- Centres of education & curricula
- More-than-human communication

EARTH-CENTRED CONSCIOUSNESS

IMAGINAL ARCHITECTURES

- Multi-species jurisprudence
- Speculative design & art
- Narrative shifts & movement building
- Future generations



Our approach to transformation

We work across three nested scales of change, building from the ground of society up: through mindset and consciousness change, living landscapes, and shifting overarching political and economic systems. Often these can overlap both in strategy and within our geographies of operation, but for ease of explanation we separate them into these categories.



Earth-Centred Consciousness

This is the soil from which all other enduring approaches take root. A root cause of the metacrisis lies in a collective mindset that is disconnected from feeling and knowing that it is the whole. The extractive logic driving breakdown is, at its core, a failure of relationship, meaning and perspective – of how human beings understand their place within the world and universe. This document outlines our evolving approach in this line of work.

Living Landscapes

Tangible and large-scale protection and restoration of Earth's ecosystems. The destruction of the planet's life support systems threatens the survivability of all other human systems. We protect the core, and in buffer zones, support innovative economic models that enable communities to generate resilient livelihoods from the revitalisation of landscapes. We rebuild biodiversity across soils, forests, and oceans; strengthen local and Indigenous knowledge systems; restore wildlife connectivity; and back ambitious research and technologies that advance new modes of sensing nature's flows - making the ecological backbone of life visible, beautiful, and impossible to ignore. Many of the partners you'll read about here are also connected to this area, due to the interconnected nature of our work. We are focussed predominantly on bioregions in Canada, Mexico, and the Andes.



Economic and Political Systems

The 'meta' layer of work. These rules of the game define the norms, incentives and direction of collective life. We focus on aligning financial realities and value systems with planetary boundaries and expanding legal systems to recognize and represent nature as a rights-bearing entity. We also support the advancement of democratic participation, the commons, community-led governance, and the agency of future generations. Again, this overlaps with many aspects of consciousness work, but is not the primary focus of this report.

Principles we navigate by

We're often asked how we navigate the delicate terrain of resourcing. It's definitely an art and not a science, yet we've naturally established the following criteria.

Spirit at the centre

Respect, honour, and collaborate with the more-than-human, the seen and unseen, and support those who do. Ask for permission and guidance.

Start from where we are

Our cultural, geographic, and spiritual context is important, reflecting the roots, lineages and connections within our team to Europe, North America and Latin America.

Mother trees

Nourishing those who act as central nodes in their ecosystems, who feed others and distribute multiple types of resources to a wider collective.

Lighthouses & Dandelions

Supporting organisations that cast a wide beam for others to navigate by & individual pollinators whose seeds travel far on the winds.

Foster connectivity

Connecting the dots between initiatives; avoid silos or one-off projects.

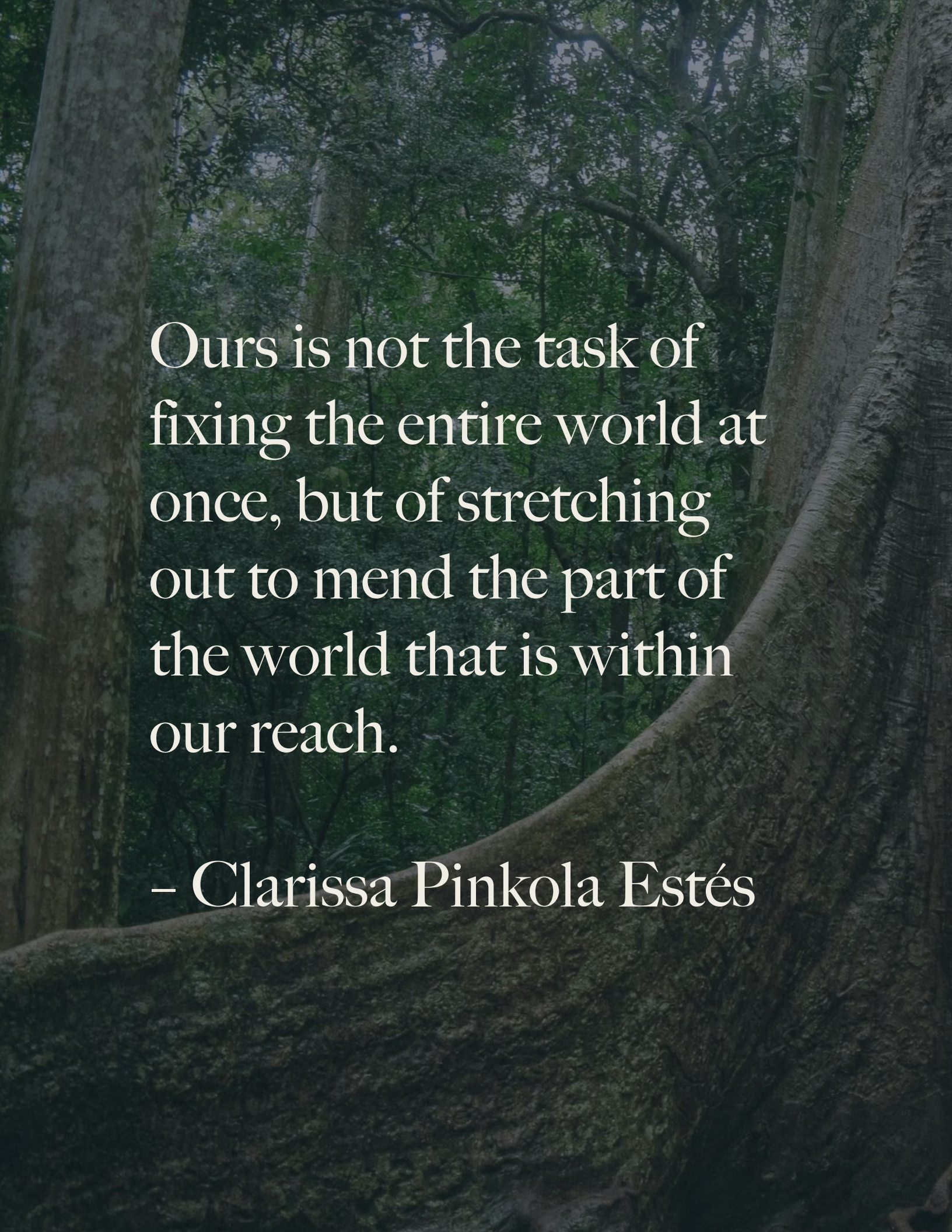
Tipping points

Seek practically engaged initiatives that normalise earth-centred consciousness, tipping it into influential contexts that ripple into the mainstream.

Upheaval awareness

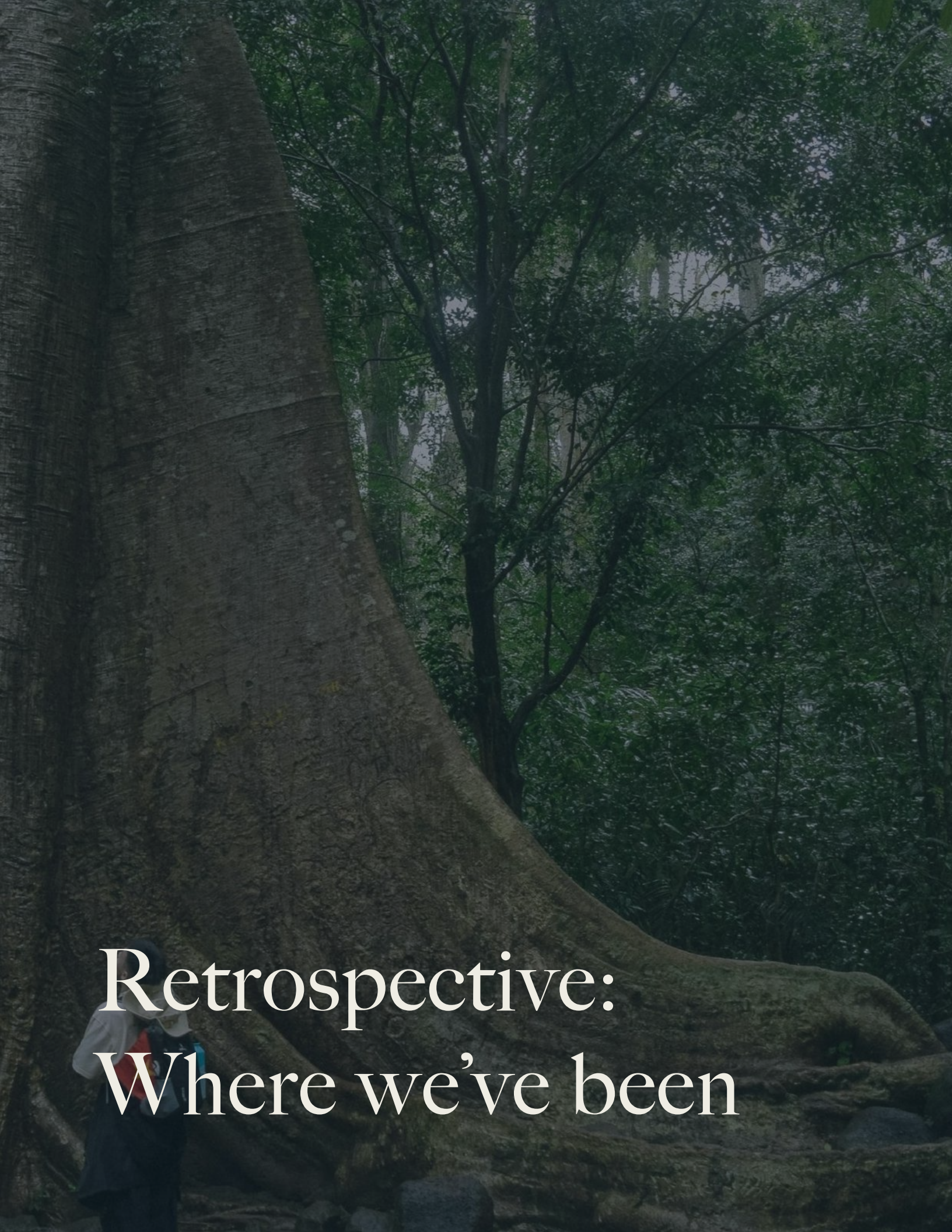
Always ask: will what we're supporting still be relevant in the context of societal upheaval and the breakdown of current systems?





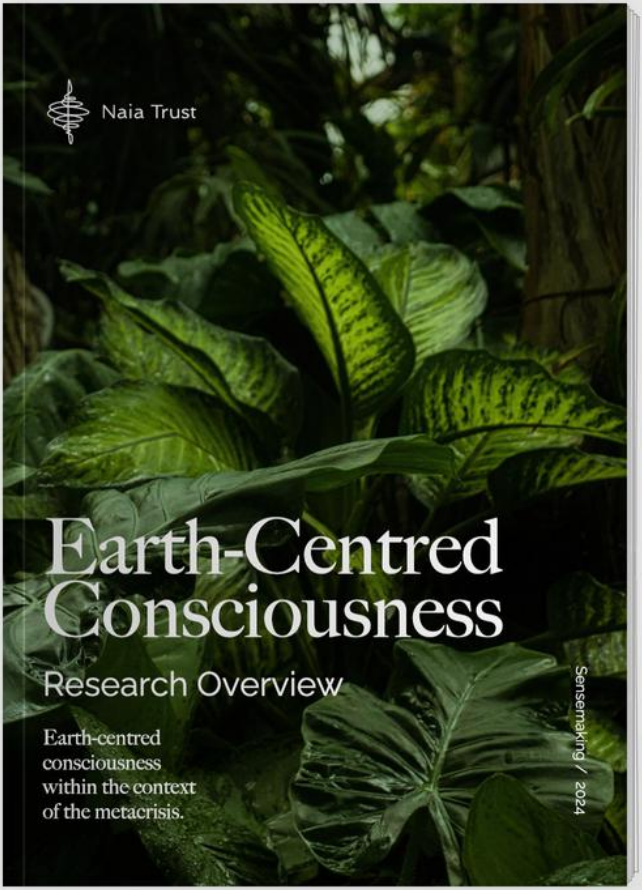
Ours is not the task of
fixing the entire world at
once, but of stretching
out to mend the part of
the world that is within
our reach.

– Clarissa Pinkola Estés



Retrospective:
Where we've been

Shared 2024 Report



In September 2024, we shared our [first report](#) detailing our initial six areas of research to establish the bones of our ‘earth-centred consciousness’ funding stream (Inner Resilience; Lighthouses; The Imaginal; Celebrating Cycles; Dharma, & Tipping Points). We were surprised at the response to the report, receiving 5000+ views and multiple reach outs. Feedback from funders and practitioners alike have pointed to a desire to have more spaces dedicated to resourcing and convening, particularly in the animist grief, ritual, more-than-human and rites of passage realms. Of the people and organisations we researched, many are now grant partners and collaborators.

Since then, we have refined these six areas into two main categories: ‘Return to Earth’ and ‘Imaginal Architectures’ (see more detail below in ‘Where we are today’).

Alongside the report we shared our [Public Sensemaking Map](#) which is a living directory of a majority of the organisations we researched. We still regularly update this with new organisations we come across – it’s a great way to find out who is on our radar.

Sensemaking Map		
Initiative	Description	Category
1440 Multiversity	A nonprofit learning destination in the California Redwoods where immersive educational experiences work to create hope for living well and to inspire the flourishing of energy, discovery and creativity.	Retreat Centres
Accidental Gods Podcast & Community	A podcast and membership platform founded by Manda Scott, exploring humanity's next evolutionary step and how we can consciously co-create a regenerative future.	Communities of Practice & Networks Media
Adamah	The largest Jewish environmental organization in North America, cultivating vibrant Jewish life in deep connection with the earth through immersive experiences, environmental education, and climate action.	Dharma & Faith-based
Advaya	A transformative learning and experience platform offering programmes designed to inspire ecological and spiritual consciousness and change, and to radically shift how you see the world and your place in it.	Transformative Learning Platforms

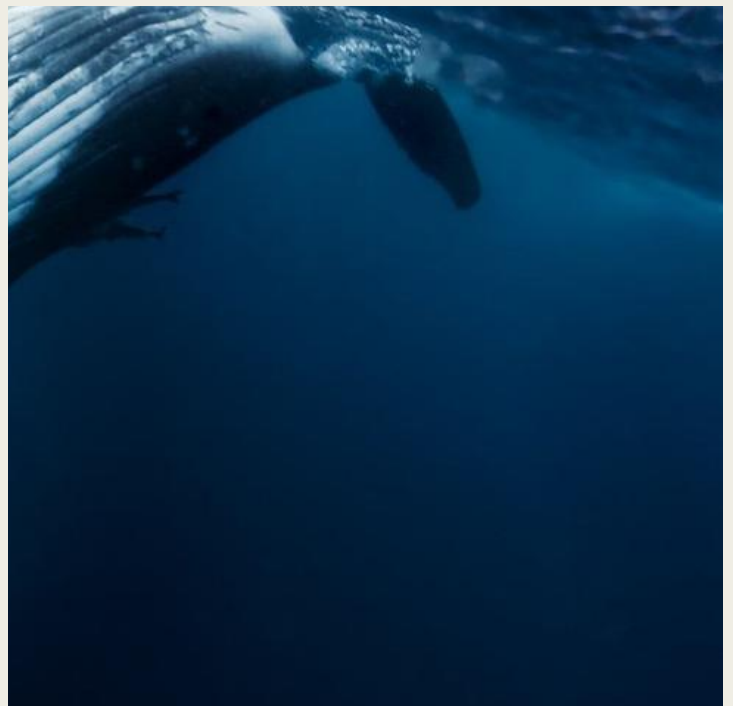
Cross-pollinating our investment streams

We have begun intentionally integrating our Earth-Centred Consciousness funding with our work on Living Landscapes and Political & Economic Change.

This activity is most cohesive at the landscape level, where biodiversity loss or restoration cannot be separated from the biocultural practices of those stewarding the land – particularly where threats to both are exacerbated by economic imperatives of extraction and degradation. We're increasingly working in bioregions where our market investments and philanthropy cohere and respond to these interlocking challenges in interesting ways.



Most explicit is our work in Latin America, specifically in Baja California Mexico, the Choco-Andes in Ecuador & Andean-Amazon gradient in Peru (see 'Field Visits' on following pages). In Mexico, our work has focused on developing a Whale Trust, an evergreen mechanism containing multiple supportive financial and governance structures for whales and ocean health, including market investments, litigation, arts and culture, a potential whale bond and more. Our team convened a Whale Gathering in May 2026, which brought together several of our grant partners together with ocean campaigners, financiers, scientists, local leaders and conservationists from our Living Landscape stream.



Field visits

Baja, Mexico

We visited with our partners at [CO_Capital](#) to design the Whale Trust in situ and meet the very whales we are seeking to support. We then returned for a convening hosted by [Equation Campaign](#) bringing lawyers, marine scientists, activists and campaigners together to strategise around defending the Gulf of California from LNG expansion.

Whales are the entry point. If the expansion proceeds it would decimate the UNESCO World Heritage site Jacques Cousteau famously called "the aquarium of the world" for its teeming biodiversity. This is where we got to know the "Whales or Gas?" movement. [Nuestro Futuro](#) is litigating the first case in Mexico to apply more-than-human legal rights to whales (the filing is written in the voice of the whales themselves - we heard parts of it read aloud and it is genuinely poetic). [Conexiones Climáticas](#) designed the campaign and now coordinates narrative and movement strategy across a coalition of more than 40 organisations. DAN does the critical work of research and government briefings to influence policy. And Marea links whale conservation to the livelihoods of coastal communities, running socio-environmental education with children who live alongside these waters.

One afternoon out on the boat we came across a whale entangled in fishing gear, and got a glimpse of the daily, unglamorous work of rescue teams like ROC - backed by more than 250 whale watching operators who keep eyes on the water (after a few hours, the whale was eventually freed!). What stayed with us was how naturally the whales themselves weave litigation, storytelling, indigenous cosmology, youth mobilisation and science into one ecological imperative and narrative.

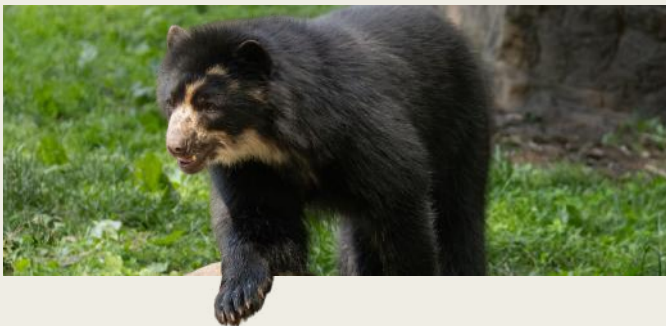


Images: Lea d'Auriol

Field visits

Ecuador

Deepened our understanding of the different landscapes that Ecuador's largest conservation NGO, our partner [Fundación Jocotoco](#), operates in. The trip included visits to two of their reserves near Quito: the Chakana (páramo) and Yanacocha (cloud forest), followed by several days at Candandé, an Andes rainforest reserve where we saw firsthand that cleared tropical rainforest can naturally regain more than 90% of its species abundance and diversity within 30 years.



Peru

Visited the Wayqecha Biological Station with [ACCA](#), the cloud forest research site situated at the head of one of the Amazon's largest watersheds, exploring the potential of strengthening a climate corridor within the Kosñipata Valley. Here we also saw a beautiful biocultural approach to protecting the Spectacled Andean Bear through hosting bear festivals and other educational activities with the local communities alongside their monitoring and restoration work (sadly we did not see this actual bear but we did see lots of bear scat... perhaps not as exciting!)

We also met with the [Los Cedros Scientific Research Station](#), protectors of this important cloud forest and emphasised the importance of bioeconomic approaches to conservation through partners like [Los Aliados](#). Most importantly we got a rare sighting of the Spectacled Andean bear!



With [Asociación ANDES](#) we visited the Parque de la Papa (Potato Park), a self-governing collective of six indigenous communities who are serving as a lighthouse model for biocultural education and indigenous food sovereignty through their deep connection protecting and cultivating over 1300 varieties of the humble and mighty potato. The scale of coordination and operational capacity these communities have built was striking, as is their ability to translate their knowledge for other communities worldwide through their Yachay Kuychi Pluriversity.



Field visits

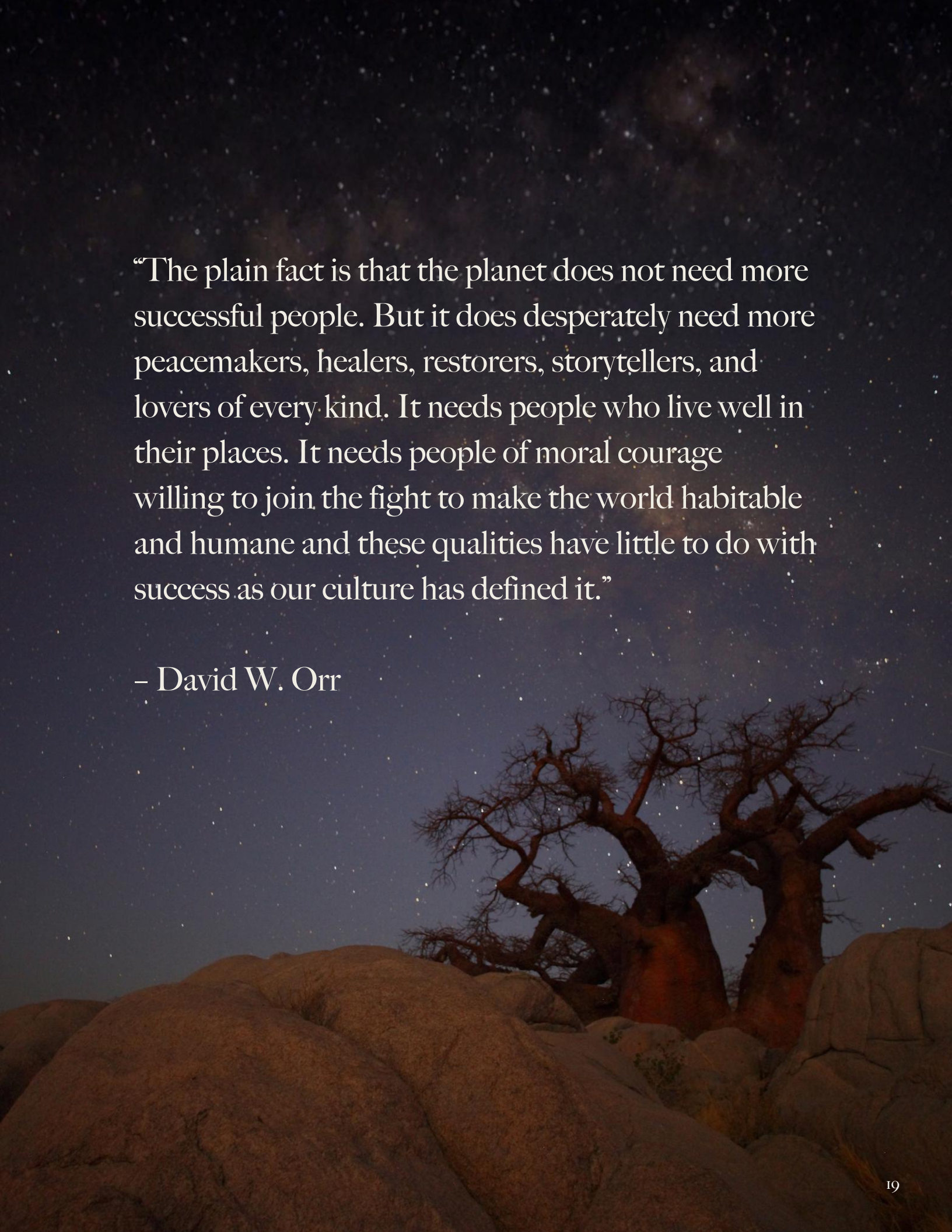
Botswana

Embarked on a field trip with our partners at Animate Earth, co-founded by Rachel Fleming and Colin Campbell, to understand in greater depth one of the main cosmologies informing the new curriculum they are developing with Exeter University as 'The College of Contemporary Animism.' Spent time on the Campbell family's land outside Gaborone, with Colin and his brother Niall, who are both traditional healers and initiated into the Fondo sangoma lineage, and have run wilderness immersions and traditional ceremonies over many decades in this wild landscape.

Our team took part in a thanksgiving ritual and ceremony rooted in place and lineage, gaining a far more embodied sense of the cosmological foundations and relationship to land, ancestors and the more-than-human world that shape the Animate Earth programmes. We were deeply touched by the generosity, integrity and depth with which they practice, and their commitment to weaving the fabric of a community, language, and tradition that is at risk of disappearing in Botswana and therefore from the world.



We're excited about the bridging work that is being undertaken to ensure some aspects of these fundamental ways of understanding human relationship to the cosmos are translated and integrated into relevant curriculum for our times.



“The plain fact is that the planet does not need more successful people. But it does desperately need more peacemakers, healers, restorers, storytellers, and lovers of every kind. It needs people who live well in their places. It needs people of moral courage willing to join the fight to make the world habitable and humane and these qualities have little to do with success as our culture has defined it.”

– David W. Orr

Hosted Return to Earth

Created and hosted two cohorts of “Return to Earth”, our annual gathering of grant partners, animist practitioners, culture shapers, and philanthropists, over four days of immersive workshops and ceremony. This space has been delightfully generative, catalysing many collaborations in the more-than-human field and most importantly, nourishing the practitioners within it.

What people said

“Through ceremony, practice, and intellectual rigour, it opened possibilities for planetary-scale imagination. Profound and necessary work.”

“A heartfelt gathering of leading-edge practitioners, brimming with energy, inspiration, depth and potential. Together we tasted the future — and it was beautiful.”



“My overwhelming sensation was one of exultant relief — the mix of people, the generosity of spirit, and the free sharing of deep wisdom. Life-changing.”

We committed to a year of ongoing community support after each cohort, hosting regular calls and in-person reunions throughout the year. The response has been overwhelmingly positive, with the participants (many of whom are practitioners who often work alone or are leaders in their own fields) commenting on the sense of relief they felt being alongside peers and finding new support and inspiration. We initially tried to keep track of all the collaborations emerging but it became impossible as there were so many! What we’re seeing emerge is a community of practice that we are humbled and honoured to be a part of supporting.



Launched our partner support system

As part of the intention to cross-pollinate our different workstreams at Naia Trust we invited our 50+ grant partners for our first ecosystem call. It will be a twice-yearly space for our partners to share the work they're doing and exchange knowledge.

In addition, we're exploring what additional support is needed in the organisations we support: communications, fundraising, responsible uses of AI, organisational and leadership development, and are providing training where there is need.

Attended courses and gatherings

People often ask us for course and event recommendations...
This is who we've been learning from.

Be The Earth Festival, South Africa

Soulcraft Intensive, Animas Valley

Positive Deviants & Be The Ground: Sexy Life Skills for the Apocalypse, Wolf Willow

More Than Human Life Course, MOTH, NYU

MOTH Festival of Ideas, MOTH, NYU

Building Indigenous Solidarity, ReHuman School

Bioregional Banquet, Bioregional Learning Centre

Subtle Energies of the Land, Animate Earth

Listening to the Land, Oxford Real Farming Conference, Real Farming Trust

Beth Nawr? What now? Festival, Black Mountains College

Katapult Future Fest, Amsterdam

Cultivating the Diviner, Animate Earth

Ecofluency, Saskia von Diest

Medicine Festival, UK



Welcomed new guests to the Lifeworlds podcast

Speculative Designs & Embodied Imagination – Superflux (Anab Jain)

The Ecology of Health – Dr. Mackenzie Hall

Whale Dreaming & Ocean Songlines – WHAIA

Carbon and the Grammar of Life – Paul Hawken

Grief, Song and Ceremonies of Mourning – Alexandra “ahlay” Blakely

Holistic Landscape Restoration and Inspirational Returns – Willem Ferwerda (Commonland)

Depth Psychology and Soul Initiation – Bill Plotkin (Animas Valley Institute)

Empatheatre: Social Sculpture & Feeling Across Worlds – Dylan McGarry

Black Mountains College: Rethinking Education for Our Times – Ben Rawlence

From Stardust To Sentience: Astrobiology & Life in the Cosmos – Adam Frank

Stingless Bees, Ancient Honey & the Amazon's Future – Dr. Rosa Vásquez Espinoza

Whale Lexicons: A Language of the Deep – David Gruber and César Rodríguez-Garavito

Mother Trees And Forest Resilience – Dr. Suzanne Simard



Where we
are today

Our two main areas of focus are...



Return to Earth

Rituals of belonging are as ancient as our bones, yet Western culture has been severed from the sacred rhythms of the Earth. We seek to restore the deep intelligence of rites of passage, more-than-human communication, grief & ritual, and centres of education & curricula, cultivating not only inner resilience but the restoration of awe.



Imaginal Architectures

The potential futures we step into are only as attainable as our ability to collectively imagine and perceive them as possible. We support communities in envisaging and embodying new worlds, for example through multi-species jurisprudence, speculative design & art, narrative shifts & movement building and in service to future generations.

An important categorical caveat!

Within these areas sit whole fields, all connected. Our consciousness funding stream weaves with our investments in living landscapes and political/economic systems change (indicated with a * on following pages). Within our consciousness stream itself, while you will see we have separated organisations out into discrete areas, this is simply to help our human brains identify some of the main themes we're working with. Many of our partners touch upon multiple themes.

For example...

Grief is one of many rites of passage, the practice of which helps grow the capacities to communicate with the more-than-human world which in turn supports efforts towards multi-species jurisprudence, a field which has inspired and been fed by the speculative designers and artists who are at the forefront of creating the imaginaries we need to shift narratives and build an earth centred movement together with and for future generations.

All these topics are being embedded in centres for education and designed into the curriculums of the future.

See? All connected!





We are creatures of constant
awe, curious at beauty, at leaf
and blossom, at grief and
pleasure, sun and shadow.

– Ada Limón

Return to Earth

Rites of passage · More-than-human
communication · Grief & ritual ·
Centres for education & curricula



Rites of passage

We use 'rites of passage' as shorthand to refer to practices that are restoring human capacity to be in a direct relationship with and as nature. Often through initiatory or ceremonial work e.g. nature solos, vision fasts or wilderness vigils, but also through modalities like depth and eco-psychology.

What we noticed

In our last report we asked what it would look like if every young person had the chance to do a rite of passage as a cultural norm as they enter into adulthood. What if rites of passage and marking meaningful thresholds throughout life became the norm? We saw a small number of well respected organisations acting as the 'mother trees' running programmes and training new guides, and yet heard from them that their audiences often lacked diversity, reflecting similar ethnic, geographic and socioeconomic groups.

How we're responding

Committed to a three-year pilot with the Centre for Rites of Passage aimed at mainstreaming youth rites of passage in the UK with the hope that, if successful, this approach could be a lighthouse model for restoring these practices across many geographies. We're funding 'mother tree' organisations like Animas Valley, Living Connection 1st, and School of Lost Borders as the most direct way to nourish the whole field. School of Lost Borders are adapting their programmes and organisational practices to be more accessible to the global majority, and to this end are emphasising training guides who reflect this demographic. Flock Together is also addressing underrepresentation of people of colour in the outdoors, creating a global movement to 'bring the masses into nature'. We're excited for the possibility of rites of passage and connection to nature becoming more mainstream through a combination of all these efforts and more.

Partners

Animas Valley

Wilderness immersion school offering vision quests and depth psychology programmes to support soul-level initiation in nature.

School of Lost Borders

Bringing rites of passage into the modern world through vision fasts, trainings and nature- based initiation.

Centre for Rites of Passage

Mainstreaming rites of passage in the UK and beyond.

Living Connection 1st

Deep nature connection through mentoring and relational ecology.

Centre for Wild Spirituality

Earth-centred spiritual practice through multi- faith wild nature immersion, ceremony and animist ways of knowing; network of over 300+ wild church groups.

Flock Together

Sparkling a global movement connecting mainstream culture to the outdoors.





More-than-human communication

We use 'more-than-human communication' to describe the growing field of practices and technologies through which humans are learning to perceive, interpret, and relate to the voices and intelligences of other species and living systems, spanning both intuitive relational approaches to interspecies connection and the emerging science and technology of decoding nonhuman communication.

What we noticed

The field spans many areas from subtle agroecology to biocultural indigenous practices, yet it does seem to have little dialogue or shared infrastructure between intuitive and relational approaches to interspecies communication, and technological efforts to decode animal communication. We also noticed that funding and attention tend to concentrate on the technological, scientific research side (which is still not well resourced), and less resources are available to those practitioners and academics working on the leading edge of direct communication i.e. speaking unmediated with animals, plants, ecosystems, and nature spirits.

How we're responding

The applications of intuitive and technologically enabled communication are endless, from food and farming to conservation. We have conducted a separate piece of research to look more deeply into the implications of communication in these different contexts and possible avenues for support and funding. We strongly invite fellow funders and allies to join us in this exploration. Please be in touch if you are interested in supporting this field to grow.

Partners

Listening to the Land (Real Farming Trust)

Cultivating reciprocal listening practices between farmers, land and the non-human communities they steward.

Project CETI*

Applying machine learning and marine robotics to decode sperm whale communication, with the aim of changing how humans understand and relate to other species.

On our radar

Nature's Council

A group of intuitive interspecies communicators offering an advisory council that consults directly with Nature, so more-than-human voices can be included as stakeholders in projects and decisions affecting them.

Ecofluency

Consultancy and teaching practice, founded by Saskia von Diest, offering training and facilitation in communication with the more-than-human world

Subtle Agroecologies

This field is being researched by Dr. Julia Wright and her students at the Centre for Agroecology, Water & Resilience (CAWR) at Coventry University.

ANICOM

Vanessa Wijngaarden's European Research Council funded project exploring intuitive interspecies communication across cultures and contexts.

Quantum Leap, Subtle Energies

Working with land energies to support beneficial agricultural outcomes for farmers, land owners and the species they work with.





Grief & ritual

Almost every culture in the world has cultivated practices for metabolising grief. Westernised cultures today however experience a dearth of ceremonial and ritual practice when it comes to individual and collective grief. This leads to a population that is ill-equipped and one could say quite paralysed – at the individual, communal, and societal levels – to meet the deep-seated pain linked to environmental degradation, species extinction, cultural disconnection, and the loss of livelihoods and home. Armouring our hearts comes at a great cost – our ability to touch and process our grief is directly linked to our ability to rise stronger, to love and engage with the world.

What we noticed

Mainstream conversation about individual experiences of grief and loss is on the rise, such as through Anderson Cooper's podcast 'All There Is'. Yet there still appears to be little recognition of the need for the metabolisation of grief at a collective level. Early shoots can be seen in initiatives of a new generation of practitioners standing on the shoulders of Sobonfu and Malidoma Somé, Martín Prechtel and Francis Weller, to name a few of the root teachers in this field.

How we're responding

To this end, we've been asking who are the next generation of grief practitioners who can support the needs for these practices to become prevalent in mainstream consciousness, and then "train the trainers" to hold these spaces. Some of our early efforts therefore focussed on supporting a gathering of climate mental health practitioners engaging with this topic ([Unthinkable](#)) and supporting artist and grief facilitator Alexandra 'ahlay' Blakely in bringing her grief tending and ritual work into the medium of song through her new album, 'Rites of Nature'. We are also asking how grief awareness and practice is built into organisations where grief is not the primary focus but is recognised as important content to work with – for example in how Global Diversity Foundation created a [grief toolkit](#) for their 700+ conservation fellows.

Partners

Hearthwood Sanctuary

Grief and art in service to the living world
stewarded by Alexandra 'ahlay' Blakely.

Unthinkable

Nonprofit led by Dr. Britt Wray
addressing the hidden mental health crisis
within the climate emergency through
research and psychosocial support.

On our radar

Grief Tending in Community

Network supported by Sophy Banks, with
spaces for shared grief tending, peer-led
grief tending practices, and programmes to
support people to grow their skills and
confidence in holding spaces for grief.

Boundless in Motion

Co-founded by Kritee Kanko, a climate
scientist and Zen priest, weaving ecological
grief rituals, meditation and climate action
into a shared practice of collective liberation
and healing.





Centres for education & curricula

Most mainstream educational formats are not designed to meet the moment we're living through. Since Naia Trust was founded we've been asking: "What is relevant to 'teach' humans in the face of the future that is emerging (skills, capacities, knowledge, embodied wisdom), who is teaching it, in what format, and where? And how might we be of service to help this education blossom?"

What we noticed

There are many 'lighthouses' in this space – organisations that represent some critical aspect of what's needed and are modelling it in a way that others can emulate. There are gaps where outdated educational models have not yet been revised to meet the reality or scale of upheaval that is already happening in many parts of the world. An orientation towards place-based learning, looking to the best of indigenous practice and points in the educational system that have the potential to ripple out, has been part of our focus.

How we're responding

We've looked for curriculums that fill gaps, or teach a new or ancient way of doing things. For example, the Bioregional Learning Alliance is creating a foundational course on bioregioning. This is a current gap that we hope will support the flourishing of the bioregional movement globally. Equally there are limited degree programmes on some of the leading edge science and divination practices that Animate Earth are creating with Exeter University. Organisations like Black Mountains College and Wolf Willow Institute are teaching new forms of education that integrate the very practical skills needed in a warming world with the best of systems thinking. And platforms like ReHuman School and Yachay Kuychi Pluriversity have formats for sharing indigenous knowledge and biocultural practices in ways that benefit indigenous and non-indigenous communities alike.

Partners

Black Mountains College

UK's first university for climate change, preparing the next generation to live, learn and lead in a warming world.

Bioregional Learning Alliance (Bioregional Learning Centre)

Fostering place-based education that reconnects learning with living landscapes and local ecological knowledge.

ReHuman School

Indigenous-led learning platform weaving ancestral knowledge, earth stewardship and regenerative practice into living curricula.

College of Contemporary Animism (Animate Earth)

Exploring animist land stewardship, guiding the public – from scientists to farmers and landowners – to listen to and be guided by the living energies of the land.

Advaya

Transformative online learning platform bringing leading practitioners and thinkers together to shift consciousness and offer new ways of being and seeing.

Plum Village

Global mindfulness community founded by Thich Nhat Hanh, offering retreats and engaged Buddhist teachings on interbeing with the Earth.

Wolf Willow Institute

Pairs rigorous systems-change pedagogy with wilderness immersion, depth psychology, somatic practice and the arts.

One Earth Sangha

Buddhist community translating dharmic teachings on interbeing into engaged care and action for the ecological crisis.

Kincentric Leadership

Developing a new paradigm of leadership grounded in kincentric ecology, embedding the intelligence of the living world into governance and decision-making.

Global Diversity Foundation

Safeguarding biocultural diversity by building leadership capacity among Global South conservation changemakers through fellowships and peer networks.

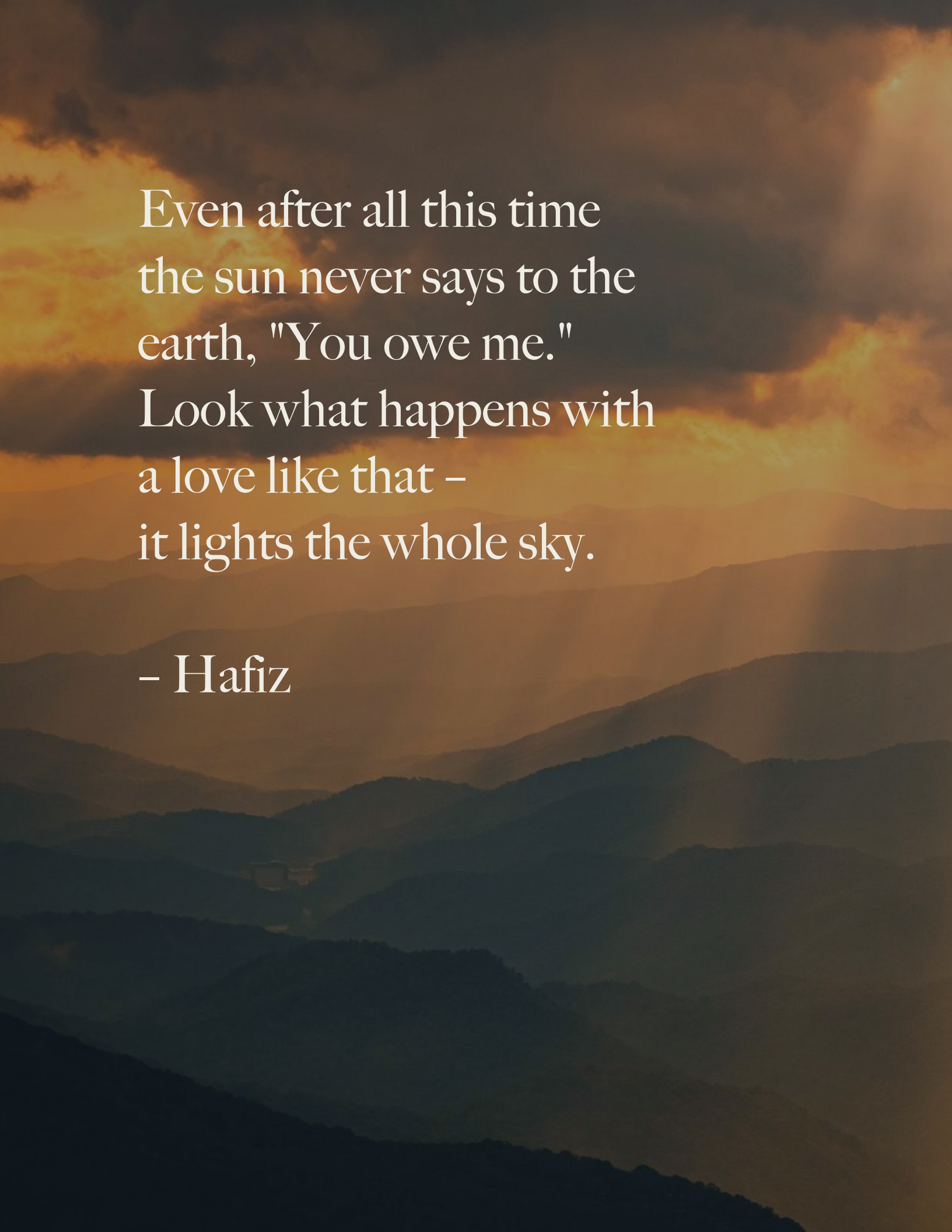
Yachay Kuychi Pluriversity (Asociación ANDES)

Implementation of Biocultural Territories and indigenous-led biocultural curriculum development based on the Andean principle of Sumaq Kawsay.

On our radar

The Loka Initiative

Education and outreach platform building the capacity of faith leaders and Indigenous culture keepers to develop faith-led environmental and climate resilience projects, bridging spiritual and scientific approaches to the ecological crisis.



Even after all this time
the sun never says to the
earth, "You owe me."
Look what happens with
a love like that –
it lights the whole sky.

– Hafiz



Imaginal Architectures

Multi-species jurisprudence ·

Speculative design & art ·

Narrative shifts & movement building ·

Future generations



Multi-species jurisprudence

We use 'multi-species jurisprudence' as a term to describe the multiple approaches that extend legal standing, representation, and voice to the more-than-human world, ranging from Rights of Nature legislation to interspecies councils and Ecocide law. They all enquire into how global governance can evolve such that non-humans are treated as stakeholders rather than property.

What we noticed

The Rights of Nature and Earth Jurisprudence field has grown rapidly and is in the state of 'a thousand flowers blooming'. It currently spans practices such as academic law, grassroots campaigning, indigenous legal traditions, speculative governance experiments and more, with fewer actors bridging these worlds or translating legal theory into imaginative or applicable frameworks that others can adopt. One common pattern is the equivalent of 'paper parks' in the conservation movement – that a decree or law can be enshrined and exist on paper, but the actual implementation and socialisation of that law has yet to take root, requiring the training of judges, legal practitioners and the upswell of popular support in mainstream society. We see these interventions as both a triage approach (for example the recent successful case of Los Cedros preventing mining extraction in a pristine cloud forest), and a transformative approach (shifting long term narrative views towards co-existence and equity with more than human life). We may 'lose cases' but still advance new moral and ethical boundaries, akin to the rights granted to women, children, and LGBTQIA+ folks over the previous decades.

How we're responding

We back initiatives that combine Multi-Species Jurisprudence with movement building, bioeconomy/economic alternatives, pragmatic legal training and implementation – ie. a whole stack solution vs. single point efforts.

For example, we've supported Amazon Research Internacional, a Peruvian conservation organisation that works with the stingless bee to obtain the world's first recognition of an insect's rights, and works with wild beehives and indigenous keepers in the Amazon to weave large scale conservation corridors, indigenous livelihoods, educational programs, and deep culture shifts recognising the bees as a source of national pride. We partner with MOTH as a movement builder and 'mother tree' in the more-than-human field laying the ground for intercultural and interdisciplinary collaboration and ideation through programmes such as the MOTH Festival of Ideas and their annual course (we highly recommend both!) plus their newly launched fellowship. They also combine their work with Project CETI and CELID Plural to advocate for the rights of whales in constitutional courts.

Partners

MOTH

An interdisciplinary initiative advancing rights and well-being for humans, nonhumans, and the web of life that sustains us all.

Amazon Research Internacional*

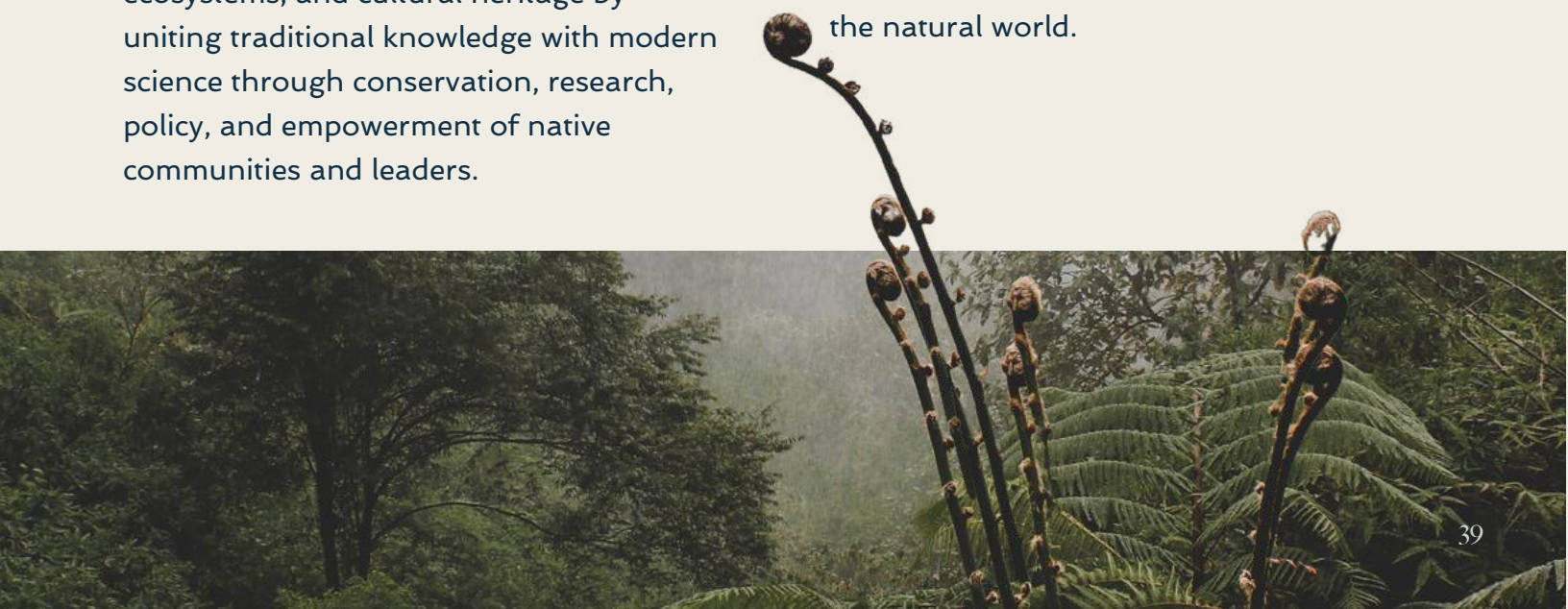
Regenerating Amazonian biodiversity, ecosystems, and cultural heritage by uniting traditional knowledge with modern science through conservation, research, policy, and empowerment of native communities and leaders.

Fundación Celid Plural*

Interdisciplinary Ecuadorian NGO dedicated to the legal and cultural defense of human rights and the rights of nature.

Stop Ecocide International*

Developing the recognition of ecocide as a serious crime with an enforceable framework to deter destructive practices and safeguard the natural world.



Speculative design & art

These are creative practices that make possible futures, and the more-than-human relationships within them, tangible and felt rather than merely argued for. They use tools like immersive performance, participatory visioning, and technology-enabled sensory experience to shift public perception ahead of policy or behaviour change.



Image: Empatheatre

What we noticed

Data and argument alone rarely shift how people feel about the ecological crisis or their relationship to the more-than-human world; artists and designers working experientially, through performance, immersive technology, and collective visioning are often better placed to make a different future feel real and desirable. We've met some extraordinary artists imagining new worlds who are not necessarily linked up with the lawyers or educational institutions that could benefit most from their gifts.

How we're responding

Part of the joy of convening for us has been bringing these designers and artists together with other practitioners in the field, to find places of mutual exchange where the skills of each group add up to the sum of something greater. For example; Empatheatre has a history of shifting policy through their plays (including supporting community efforts to win a case against an unlawful Shell exploration in South Africa); and are currently working on a new whale play that will directly benefit the work of our partners mentioned above as well the Whale Trust. Meanwhile, Marshmallow Laser Feast's depiction of water cycles around the earth can be adapted and applied to mapping whale migratory corridors and reaching audiences through their exhibition format that would be harder for an organisation like Project CETI to engage.

Partners

Empatheatre

South African theatre company using immersive, empathy-based performance to shift perspectives on ecological and social justice globally.

Town Anywhere

Large-scale community visioning experience where up to 300 people collectively imagine and build the town of their desired future in a single day in a more-than-human and polycrisis informed way.

Marshmallow Laser Feast

Artists' collective using VR and digital technologies to create visceral immersions into the invisible worlds of nature, dissolving the boundary between human and more- than-human.

Thrutopian Project (Manda Scott & Rob Hopkins)

Weaving fiction and activism to craft compelling narratives of just ecological futures that can inspire cultural and political transformation.



Image: Marshmallow Laser Feast

On our radar

Superflux

Speculative design, critical foresight and experiential futures studio, known for immersive installations that make climate and ecological futures viscerally tangible, from post- Anthropocene domestic interiors to multi- species banquets.

Mundo Común

Colombia-based collective that leads restorative wilderness retreats for climate practitioners on the frontlines and organises interspecies activations globally to activate collective wisdom and creative agency between humans and the more-than-human world.



Narrative shifts & movement building

Long before a culture changes its laws, it changes its stories – and beneath its stories, its narrative: the implicit and shared understanding of what the world is and our place within it. The dominant story of climate in our wider culture has been told in the language of carbon, crisis, and data, instilling anxiety but not really inspiring or transforming culture.

Perhaps, like us, you watched 'My Octopus Teacher' and afterwards found yourself caring infinitely more about the lifeworld of an octopus – so much so that you think twice before eating one now. That film is also understood to have catalysed real movement towards the protection of kelp forests. Crafted well, narratives can tip what once felt fringe to become common sense. We're wondering what equivalent stories need to be broadcast at this time.

We came to this inquiry not as theorists of social movements or expert campaigners (there are many, and it is not our skillset!) but with a question: "The consciousness we strive to enable is ancient and alive in the souls and hearts of millions – so why does it so rarely surface in mainstream culture, and what would help it tip?" Almost everything we fund depends on humans shifting their perception of the natural world. We want to meet the people who can help make that happen.



What we noticed

We are in the early stages of this inquiry yet we sense there is real appetite here. The people we've spoken with so far tell us that audiences are exhausted by emergency and doom, and are hungry for aliveness. This tells us that the register we work in, belonging rather than alarm, is not niche but an unmet mainstream need. Another obvious but important insight has been that the success of ideas making their way into the mainstream often doesn't happen by accident. Usually there is years of planning and support behind culturally catalytic moments, and economic tipping points. In other words, the stories that changed the world were schemed up, carried and converted by people who knew exactly what they were doing. We wanted to meet those people who we've come to call 'amplifiers' and 'campaigners'.

How we're responding

We have just begun our listening conversations across this landscape, speaking with design studios, story consultancies, global campaigners, magazine makers, and storytellers. We want to better understand how narrative shift actually works, what it costs, and learn from examples in other fields. Due to its sensitive nature, some of our research in this realm will remain internal. Our interest is both in helping the work of our existing partners spread further than it otherwise would, as well as learning from those who reach wider audiences beyond the usual rivers we swim in. Many of the partners we've mentioned in this report tend to the depth of the shifts that are required of human beings to live well on this earth. In this theme we hope to address the question of reach.

Partners

Earthly Education

Mobilising a million+ strong social media community into ecological education, campaigns and tangible action.

Earth Repair Fund

Media studio where viral documentaries about notable restoration projects double as crowdfunding engines for the projects themselves.

On our radar

Conexiones Climáticas

Practicing climate communication in service of action, providing the communications and mobilisation backbone for frontline campaigns, from the “Whales or Gas?” coalition to land defender networks across eight states in Mexico.

Imagine5

Print and online magazine using solutions-focused, hope-driven storytelling (interviews, essays, toolkits, film) to turn climate anxiety into everyday action.

Wimblu

Costa Rican non-fiction studio creating stories that restore belonging and connection to the Earth in English and Spanish, through documentary film, a magazine, podcast and community gatherings.

Good Energy Stories

Nonprofit story consultancy bringing climate into mainstream film and television, from Disney's studios to the Television Academy.

Sea Change Project

Storytelling and science collective behind My Octopus Teacher, working to protect the kelps of the Great African Seaforest.

Purpose

Global movement-building agency working across narrative, mobilisation and campaigns in a dozen countries that works with philanthropic partners worldwide.

Civilization

Design-for-advocacy studio with twenty years of movement craft behind campaigns like Shout Your Abortion and Recompose.

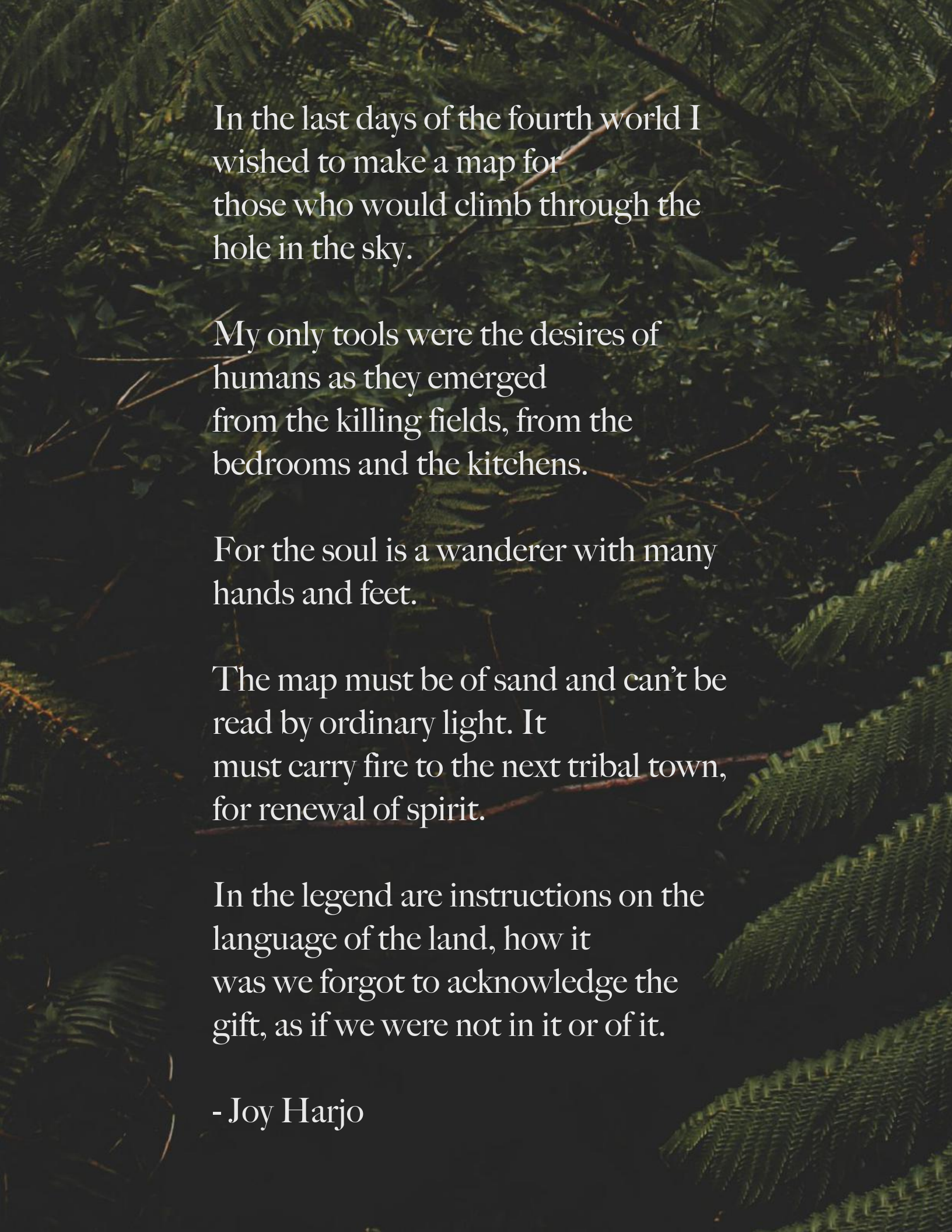




Future generations

This is a newer stream of work that is cross cutting. Here we are asking, “How might we equip the next generations well? What needs to be passed down and where might we need to listen? Who is providing those spaces already? What young leaders are emerging whose voices speak for the future of humans and more-than-human kin?”

To date we’ve partnered with [The Resilience Project](#), a youth-led initiative building emotional resilience and community support for young climate activists to sustain long-term meaningful action. We are also in the early stages of conversation with [Future Council](#), who convene intergenerational dialogue and advocate for the interests of future generations in policy and governance. They also have a film out by the same name. And of course our partnerships with Black Mountains College and Centre for Rites of Passage seek to create educational options that will actually equip the next generation with the skills they need to live in a significantly warmer world.



In the last days of the fourth world I
wished to make a map for
those who would climb through the
hole in the sky.

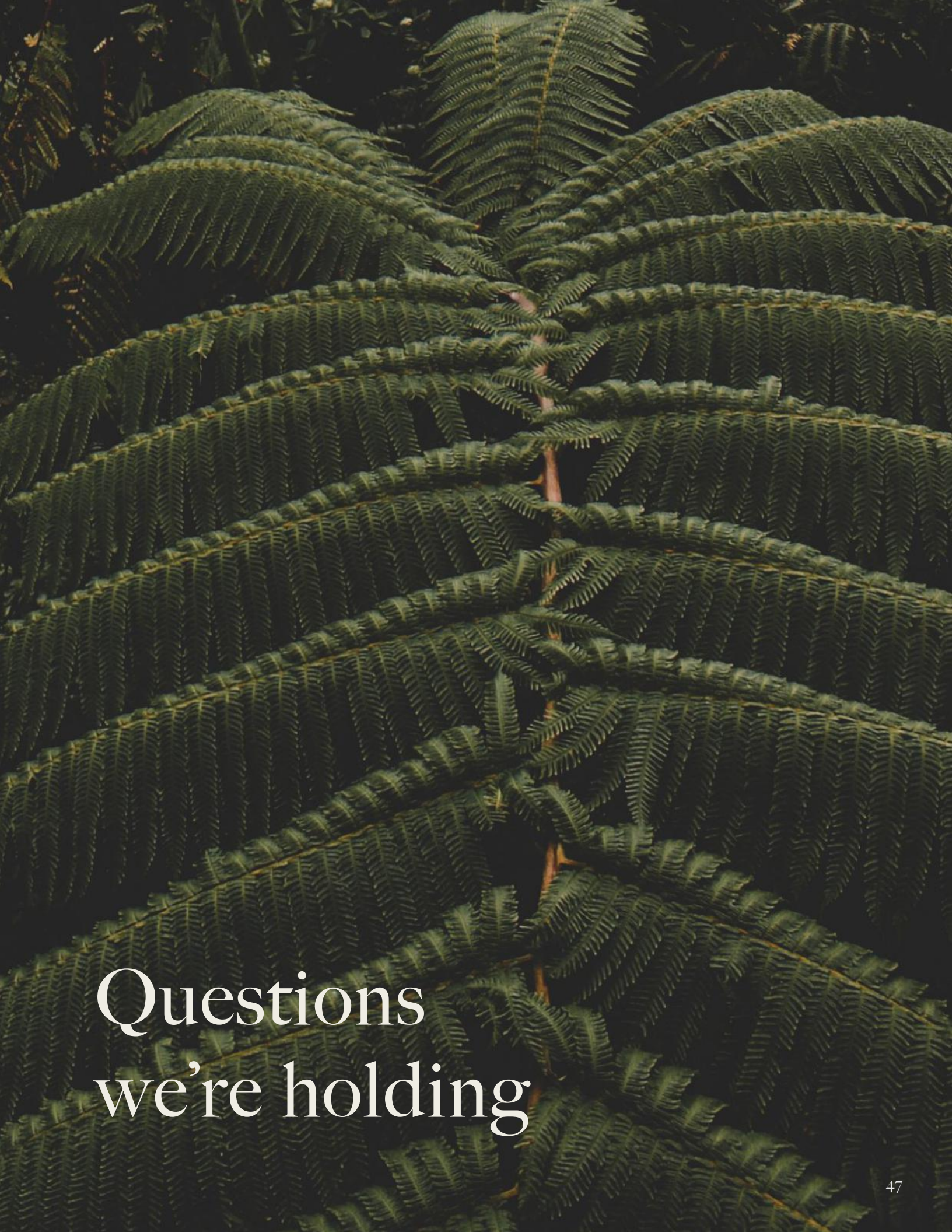
My only tools were the desires of
humans as they emerged
from the killing fields, from the
bedrooms and the kitchens.

For the soul is a wanderer with many
hands and feet.

The map must be of sand and can't be
read by ordinary light. It
must carry fire to the next tribal town,
for renewal of spirit.

In the legend are instructions on the
language of the land, how it
was we forgot to acknowledge the
gift, as if we were not in it or of it.

- Joy Harjo



Questions
we're holding

Do we have the “right” approach?

We are operating from the assumption that changing people’s perception and experience of themselves, each other, and the more-than-human world will have transformational ripples in dominant culture. We’re open to the possibility that an entirely different approach might reveal itself to be more appropriate.

How does Earth-Centred Consciousness weave its way into mainstream culture?

As shared, we are listening across the landscape of narrative builders, campaigners and amplifiers to learn whether their craft can help the work happening in the more-than-human field to expand beyond the already-converted.

How can this work meet humanity's need for safety and trust in times of breakdown?

Much of what we fund speaks to belonging, awe and imagination. And yet we know that as systems shake, people reach first for security. We're sitting with how earth-centred consciousness can be a source of real ground, not a luxury for calmer times.

How do we weave our consciousness work more deeply with our landscapes, markets and systems work?

We describe our streams separately for ease of explanation, yet the places we work keep showing us they are part of one tapestry.

What can't we see?

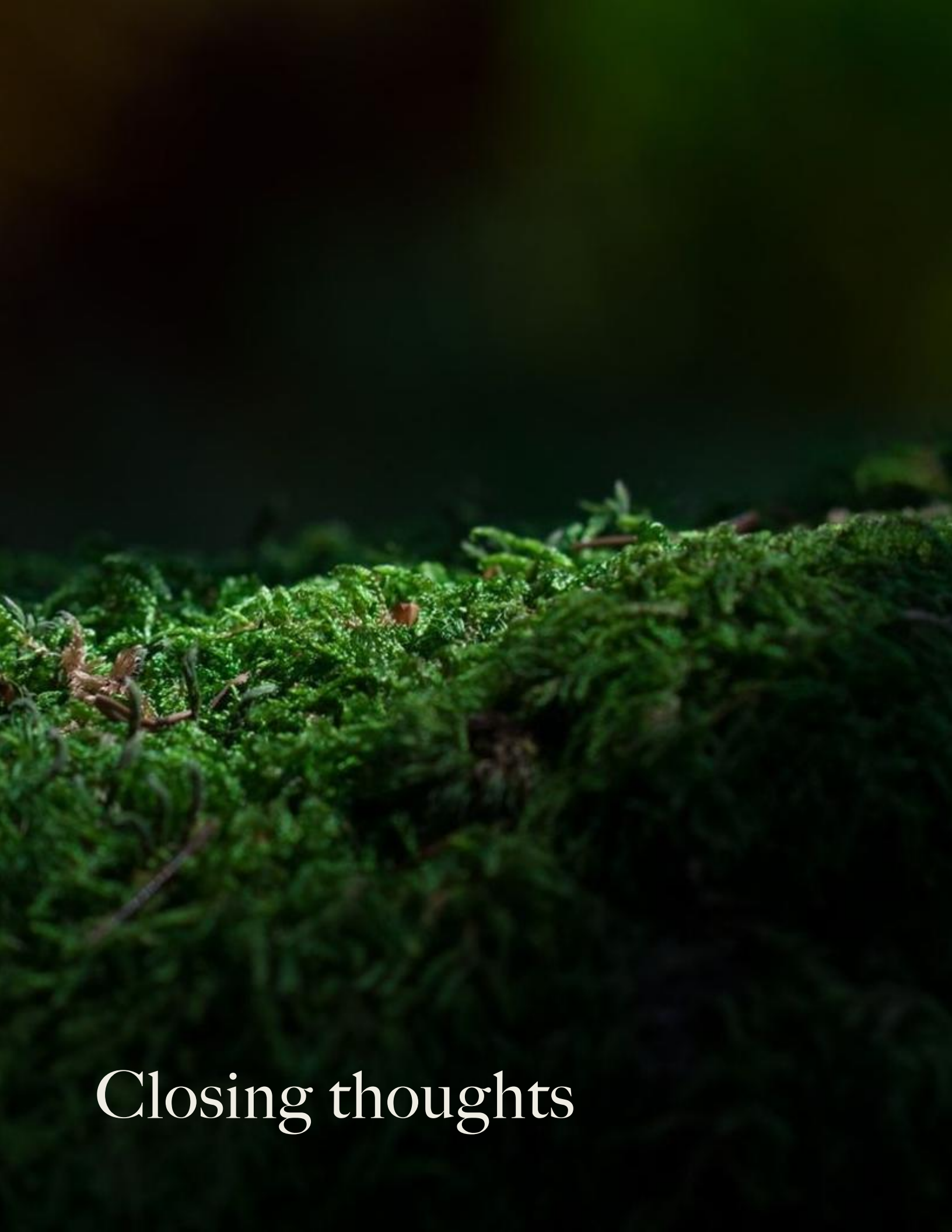
We come with particular roots, lineages and geographies, and we know there are voices, regions and ways of knowing that our maps do not yet hold. We ask this question sincerely rather than rhetorically, and we welcome anyone reading this to reflect back to us what we are not seeing.

Should we open more pathways for others to walk alongside us?

More funders and allies are finding us than we first anticipated. We're exploring what shared infrastructure could look like, whether that's co-funding grant partners, shared diligence, or simply better ways of connecting people to our partners, so that this field's growth doesn't depend on any one funder.

How do we grow this community without outgrowing our spirit?

Return to Earth and our grant partner ecosystem are growing faster than our team is. We are a small crew intentionally holding a widening circle, and we feel the creative tension in that: there is not enough room in the pie for everything we love. How do we remain true to our spirit without becoming an institution? And what is ours to hold versus what is ready to be carried by others?



Closing thoughts



It must be said that we smile at our own human-ness in writing up this document entitled ‘sensemaking’ - as though one can really ‘make sense’ of all that is unfolding on this vast, pulsing, fecund planet!

This document represents the tip of a vast iceberg of what’s out there; there are continents and cosmologies entirely missing from what we’ve been describing, and cultural nuances as rich as handfuls of fertile soil. As we said in the opening, we choose to work at the level of consciousness, because more important than what we do - the sum of our actions of regeneration and purpose in the world - lies the how and why. Actions arising out of duality and ungroundedness will inevitably lead to more division and suffering. We seek to breathe animate life into the heart and soul of the cultural worldviews and narratives that are entering their time of hospice, and, embedded in a deep knowing of our interbeing with all life, help to lay the seeds of whatever will come next.

We are deeply grateful to all of our partners and extended networks for their dedication to this work and the part they play in coming into greater connection. We are honoured and joyful that we get to walk this path together.

How to follow & engage

Our hope is that in sharing as we have, you too might recognise threads, themes, and partners you wish to draw on, support, amplify, and collaborate with.

We welcome you to follow us on [LinkedIn](#) (old school we know!) where we sometimes share updates, courses, and offerings from our partners. You can also sign up to our newsletter through the [Naia Trust website](#) (at present we're averaging one a year, so you will not be inundated!).

We regularly update our [Public Sensemaking Map](#) which tracks the organisations we come across related to these areas of interest. This is not a list of people we fund or endorse (although several are included and you can find them on our website). Rather it is a wider set of organisations in the earth-centred consciousness space that we've come across. We hope this saves the next organisation from duplicating such research, and helps people find each other!

We would love to hear anything this report has sparked in you. If you feel called, please do reach out to us at info@naiatrust.com.



Who we are



Alexa Firmenich

Alexa Firmenich is an investor, consultant and facilitator focused on climate and biodiversity, and the founder of Naia Trust. Parallel to her work with Naia Trust, she is trained as a group facilitator in leadership development and ecological pedagogy, designing multi-day learning journeys within landscapes. She is also an author, podcast host of Lifeworlds, a founding board member of Terra Habitus, a Mexican environmental fund that operates large-landscape conservation and watershed restoration, board member of Crowther Lab the global ecosystems ecology institution, and a wilderness guide.



Daniela Litowitz

Daniela Litowitz is a Strategic Advisor at Naia Trust. She has spent her professional life bringing new realities into being: building social impact ventures across the United States, the Middle East and Latin America, and advising futurists, investors and visionaries who want to move from idea to manifestation. For over twenty years she has held circles and facilitated deep work, weaving between the worlds of strategy and spirit and connecting people, traditions and initiatives that would not otherwise touch. Her path includes senior roles at Columbia University, the University of Pennsylvania's Center for Social Impact Strategy and Jerusalem Venture Partners, and co-founding Casa de Ayni, a leadership school in Mexico rooted in the Andean principle of sacred reciprocity.



Yasu Mali

Yasu Mali has spent the last decade facilitating leadership immersions in service to the earth. As a Strategic Advisor at Naia Trust, she is dedicated to strengthening the field of more-than-human practitioners and kin who speak with, to and as nature. As a Director at Intelligent Life, she is helping seed a new paradigm in human consciousness. She also helped build the Three Horizons Network – democratising access to systems change frameworks across business, politics, finance, and the third sector – and hosts the podcast 'The Patterning of Hope'. As an Associate at Leaders' Quest, she helps global companies creatively respond to social and ecological pressures. In her capacity as a board member to the nature-based leadership centre Embercombe, Yasu helped shape a new strategic direction towards rewilding people and land. Her great love is martial arts, which she practises in the Shaolin Chan Buddhist tradition.



Naia Trust