

Rooted in Place

World Localization Day

June, 2026

Stories of
localization
from around
the world.

Local
economies,
communities &
food systems

and the brilliant
people who are
strengthening
them against
the odds.



GERMANY

VIETNAM

CALIFORNIA, USA

LADAKH, INDIA

BRAZIL

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Wherever authorship is not otherwise indicated, the content was written and edited by **Anja Lyngbaek, Alex Jensen, and Henry Coleman.**

Designed by [Igor Baldez](#)

[Local Futures](#) is an international non-profit organization dedicated to renewing ecological and social well-being by strengthening communities and local economies. Together we're building a worldwide localization movement.



*To the unsung heroes
quietly at work in communities
all across the globe.*

Local is our future!



**“ANY INTELLIGENT FOOL CAN MAKE THINGS BIGGER,
MORE COMPLEX, AND MORE VIOLENT.
IT TAKES A TOUCH OF GENIUS – AND A LOT OF COURAGE
TO MOVE IN THE OPPOSITE DIRECTION.”**

E.F. SCHUMACHER

GOING LOCAL, GLOBALLY

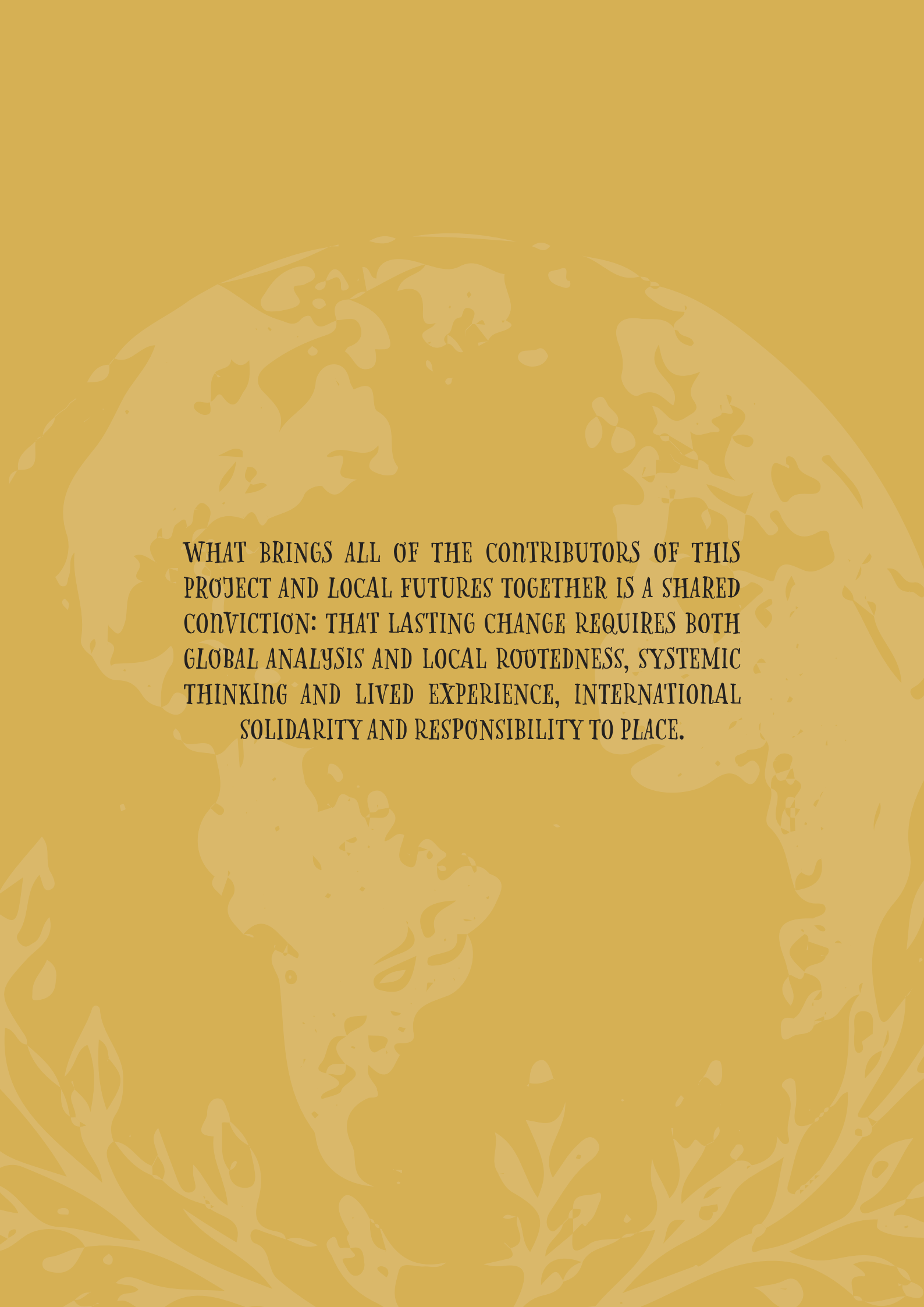
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WHAT BRINGS ALL OF THE CONTRIBUTORS OF THIS PROJECT AND LOCAL FUTURES TOGETHER IS A SHARED CONVICTION: THAT LASTING CHANGE REQUIRES BOTH GLOBAL ANALYSIS AND LOCAL ROOTEDNESS, SYSTEMIC THINKING AND LIVED EXPERIENCE, INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY AND RESPONSIBILITY TO PLACE.



DEAR FRIEND,

HELLO

XIN CHAO

JU-LE!

HALLO

OLÁ

It's easy to believe that there are no real alternatives to the global growth economy. And that's scary, because, as is becoming clearer by the day, this system of wealth concentration, unsustainable supply-chains, and monoculture is inching us ever closer to something that feels like a precipice.

But quietly, across the world, people are at work. In the blind-spots of the media spectacle, in the shadows of skyscrapers, in the cultural vacuum of consumerism, people are creating and living real alternatives. They are building or rebuilding local food systems and community networks, reviving traditional knowledge, regenerating ecosystems, and nurturing more resilient, caring local economies.

Over recent months, Local Futures and a group of our key friends and partners from five very different parts of the world — Ladakh, Vietnam, Brazil, Germany, and Cali-

fornia — embarked on a shared journey to identify and connect such initiatives. Some are small and informal; others are long-established networks or organizations. Together, they point toward a future where human-scale economies play a vital role in rescuing cultural and biological diversity, social justice, genuine democracy, and collective wellbeing from the precipice of hyper-globalization.

These pages highlight the synergies between places while also celebrating their differences. We hope they will leave you feeling inspired, encouraged, and a little less alone. Perhaps they will spark new ideas, conversations, or collaborations in your own community. Perhaps they will help you notice the seeds of change already growing around you.

From many places, with a shared purpose,

Local Futures and the mapping team

Kasme *Thais Pacheco Mantorani* *Anna Truong*
Rue *Daan* *Julio Greenway*
Huang *Hoàng Hồ Hữu Huý* *Alex Joon*
DS *Apollonia Lyngbati* *Thom*

EXPLORING THIS MAGAZINE

This publication is an outcome of a collaborative localization mapping project developed across several regions of the world. Our map is not a directory. Rather, it is a collection of stories, initiatives, and people that offer a sense of how localization, as a people's movement, manifests in different cultural and ecological contexts.

These projects vary widely in scale and form: agroecology and community-supported agriculture; seed-saving networks and local food hubs; cooperative businesses and local finance initiatives; community-owned renewable energy systems; ecovillages, co-housing and community land trusts; Indigenous land stewardship; traditional

defending land, water and livelihoods from extractive industries and destructive development. And more.

The initiatives featured herein represent just a small selection of the many projects our regional teams encountered and documented. Acting as mappers, story-gatherers, and connectors, they helped bring these diverse experiences to the forefront, weaving the threads of a movement. Links to their more expansive collections and works are provided at the end of each regional chapter.

What you will find here is not comprehensive, but rather a choice selection of the many different ways communities around the world are bringing their economy home.

We invite you to explore at your own pace, return regularly, follow your curiosity, and discover.

medicine and local language revitalization; participatory democracy initiatives; movements

LOCALIZATION: WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

Localization is the process of rebuilding stronger local and regional economies so that more of our needs can be met closer to home and within ecological limits.

It means shortening the distance between producers and consumers, strengthening local self-reliance, and shifting economic power away from global corporations toward communities, regions, and nations.

Localization does not mean ending international trade or reducing everything to the scale of a village. Rather, it means creating more diversified, place-based economies that are less dependent on distant and fragile systems.

Localization is not only an economic process, but a cultural one. As people reconnect with local food, local livelihoods, local knowledge, and one another, relationships that have been weakened by globalization begin to recover. Communities become less anonymous, production becomes more visible, and people regain a greater sense of participation, responsibility, and belonging.

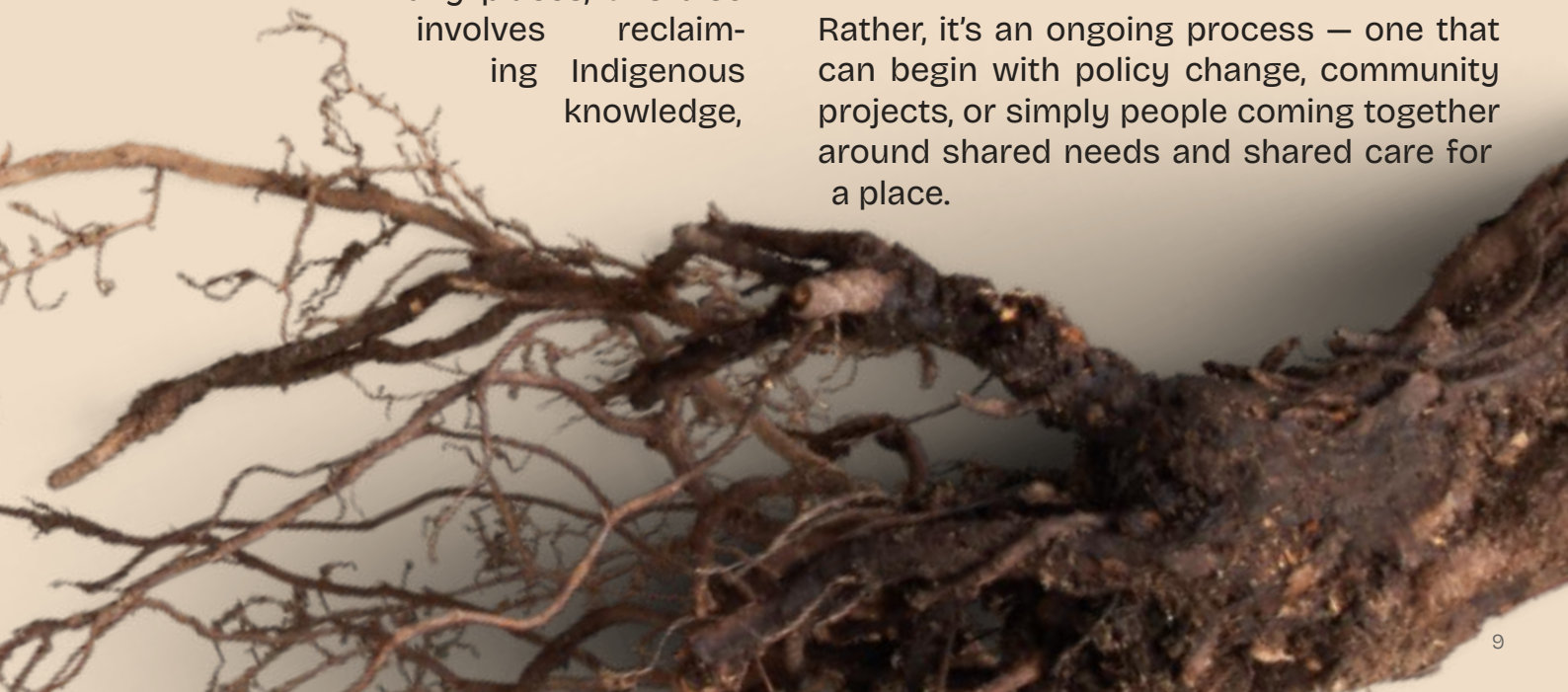
In many places, this also involves reclaiming Indigenous knowledge,

WE NEED POLICY CHANGE TOO!

TOO OFTEN, POLICIES – THINGS LIKE SUBSIDIES, TAXES AND REGULATIONS – FAVOR THE BIG, CORPORATE AND GLOBAL, WHILE HARMING THE SMALL, INDEPENDENT AND LOCAL. FOR LOCALIZATION INITIATIVES TO SURVIVE AND FLOURISH, POLICY CHANGES ARE NEEDED ON A NUMBER OF LEVELS, FROM THE LOCAL TO THE INTERNATIONAL. EVEN IF WE ARE BEST ABLE TO DIRECTLY INFLUENCE PUBLIC POLICY AT THE MOST LOCAL LEVEL, WE SHOULD BE AWARE OF – AND SUPPORT – POLICY SHIFTS AT ALL LEVELS THAT ENABLE ON-THE-GROUND LOCALIZATION EFFORTS TO THRIVE. [LEARN MORE.](#)

local autonomy, and ways of living suppressed by colonization and marginalized by industrial models of development. In this way, decentralization is fundamental to the process of decolonization. It creates space for multiple ways of knowing, producing, governing, and living to coexist, rather than forcing territories and peoples into the straight-jacket of 'development'; into the myopic dream of modernity; into the march of 'progress'.

Finally, localization is not a fixed destination, nor some outright declaration that all food should come from within a 100 mile radius. Rather, it's an ongoing process — one that can begin with policy change, community projects, or simply people coming together around shared needs and shared care for a place.



A GLOBAL MOVEMENT FOR SYSTEMIC CHANGE



The initiatives featured in this publication reveal something important: people in diverse political and historical contexts are moving in a similar direction.

This makes sense, because often they are responding to the pressures and impacts of a techno-economic machine which is global in reach, and which wreaks similar kinds of havoc across contexts. A shared understanding is emerging: many of today's social and ecological crises are not isolated problems, but symptoms of deeply centralized and extractive systems.

Ours is a movement that questions the foundations of the dominant economic model, and explores what it means to rebuild societies around care, resilience, community, and ecological balance.

Some projects work primarily through renewal and regeneration; others through resistance and protection. Many combine both.

World Localization Day is one expression of this growing global movement. Launched in 2020 as the first worldwide celebration of localization, it began by bringing together people from 172 countries around a shared recognition: that rebuilding local economies and communities is not a niche issue,

but a practical 'solution-multiplier', and a cohesive vision for systemic change.

Since then, World Localization Day has grown into a truly international and participatory process. Each June, organizations, farmers, educators, activists, businesses, artists, Indigenous leaders, community groups, and ordinary citizens across more than 50 countries on six continents host events, workshops, food gatherings, campaigns, mapping projects, and conversations that help make localization visible in all its diversity.

This initiative emerged from a simple but powerful realization: if we cannot see each other, we cannot learn from each other, strengthen each other, recognize the scale of transformation already underway, or build networks for collective and wise action.

For many years, Local Futures and World Localization Day have documented and amplified examples of localization from around the world, showing that alternatives are not theoretical, but already alive in territories.

This matters because one of the greatest strengths of the dominant system is invisibility.

Many people working toward more localized, regenerative futures often feel

fragmented, disconnected, or unsupported because larger economic and political structures rarely value or amplify their work.

Mapping and weaving helps make these efforts visible, not only to external audiences, but to one another. It creates the conditions for recognition, collaboration, and collective imagination.

Mapping and weaving localization also helps us move beyond superficial or corporate “green” solutions.

These “techno-fix” solutions tend to come from the dominant system and ultimately serve it. A global-to-local shift, on the other hand, genuinely expands our perception of what’s possible.

We are a group of people slowing down and putting our ears to the ground to identify

those people and projects in our regions who are multiplying localization. Together, we are stitching together a global storybook and listening for what might come next. It’s about building relational power and then using that shared power for localization – sustainable food systems, economic justice, and deliberative democracy. At a time when fear, polarization, and authoritarian tendencies are rising worldwide, this movement offers something profoundly hopeful: an internationalism rooted not in homogenization and corporate globalization, but in strong local communities, cultural diversity, mutual interdependence, and cooperation across borders.

In the next chapters, you will encounter just a few examples of how communities are building this movement from the ground up, showing that another way of organizing life is not only possible, but already alive.

**“IN THE CULTURE OF GLOBALIZATION, EVERY ACT OF HUMANITY,
EVERY EFFORT TO ANSWER NEED LOCALLY, EVERY SHARED GESTURE,
EVERY POOLING OF RESOURCES, EVERY ACT OF GIVING OUT OF THE
GENEROSITY OF THE UNSUBDUED SPIRIT
IS A FORM OF RESISTANCE.”**

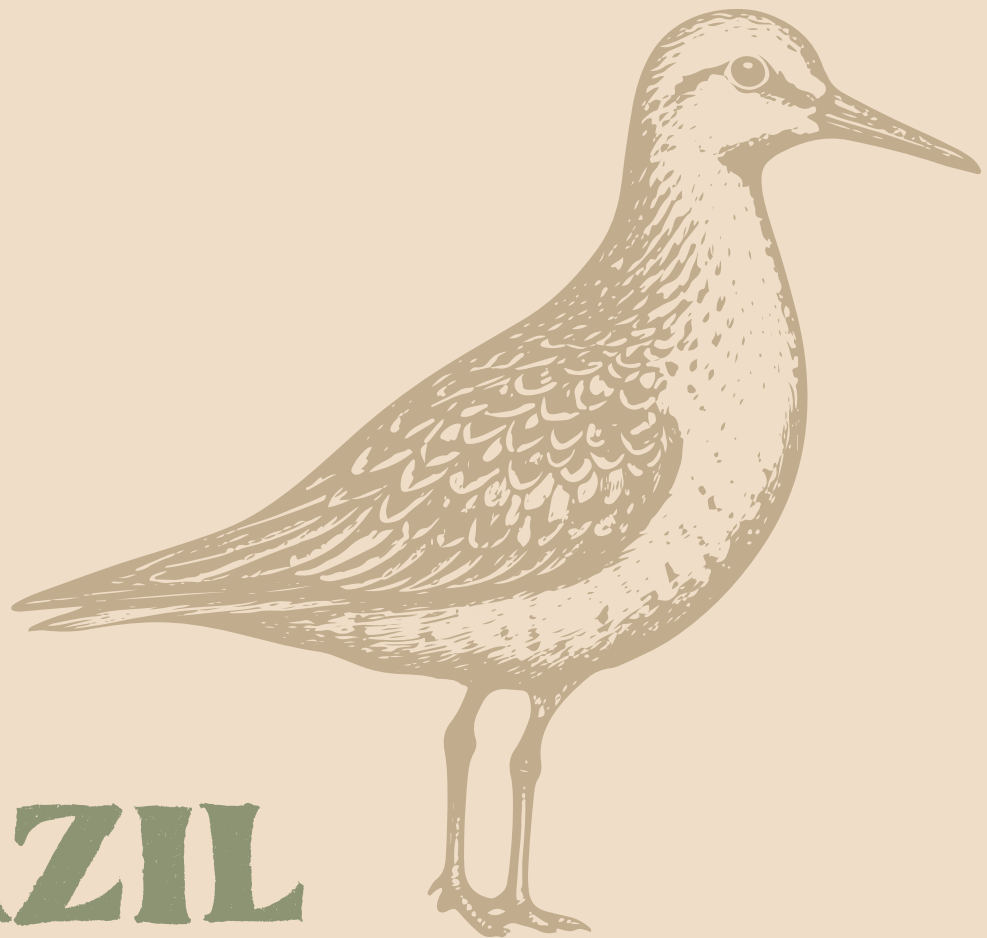
JEREMY SEABROOK





Rede de Sementes do Xingu



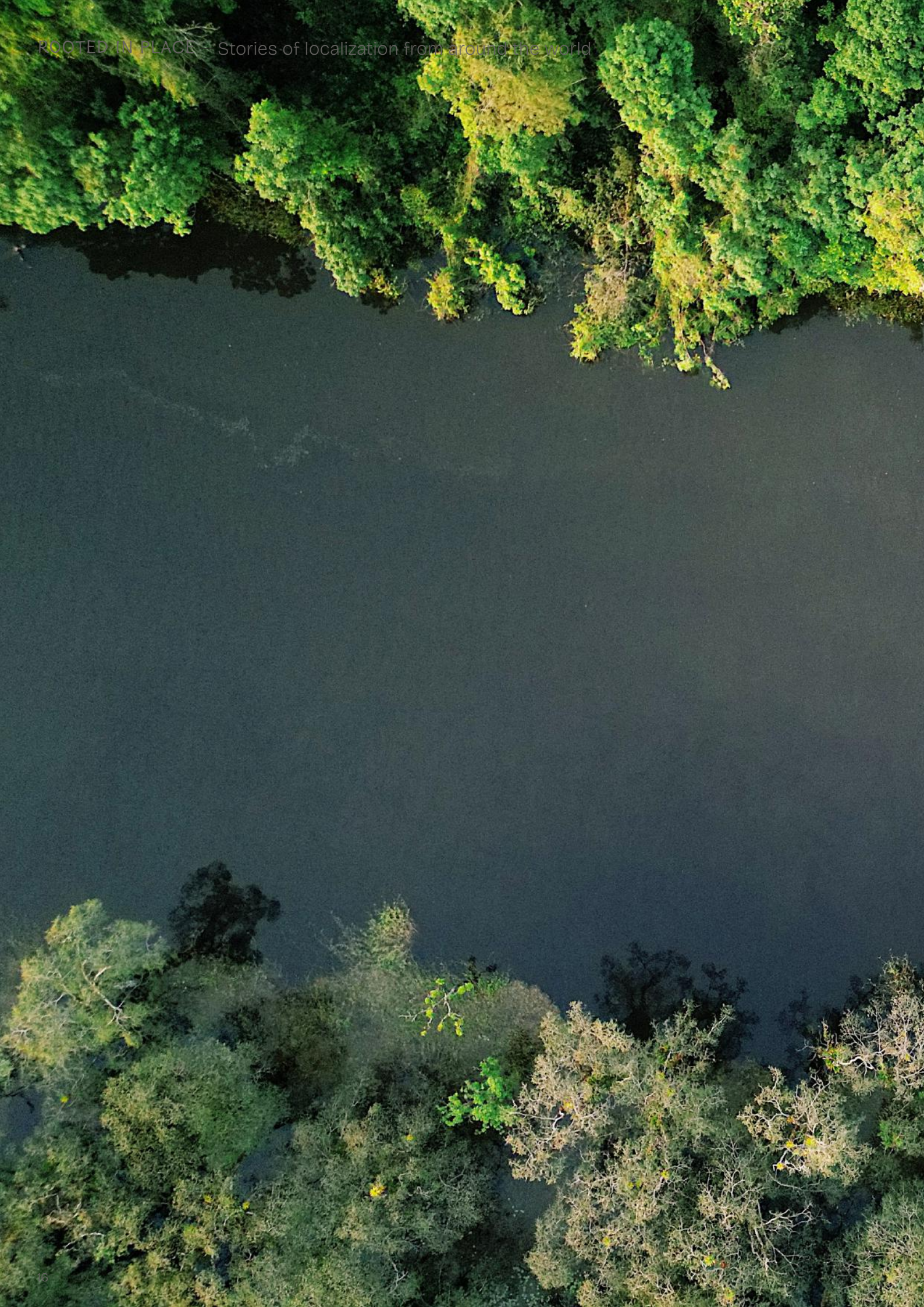


Red Knot

BRAZIL

Growing a Local Future

By Thais Mantovani
[EcoUniversidade](#)





FROM GLOBAL PRESSURES TO LOCAL POSSIBILITIES

Brazil is a country of extraordinary paradoxes. It is the world's largest exporter of soybeans, beef, and sugar, and one of the world's hungriest nations. It holds the Amazon, the Cerrado, the Pantanal (three of the planet's most critical ecological systems) and yet it also hosts some of the most aggressive industrial agricultural expansion the world has ever seen. It is home to more than 300 living Indigenous ethnicities maintaining sophisticated territorial economies honed across millennia, and yet those same peoples face land dispossession, legal precarity, and systematic erasure from the dominant economic story.

Of course, none of these are paradoxes as seen through the logic of a globalizing economy. And for decades, Brazilian territory has been organized according to that logic. The same structural force that drives deforestation in the Amazon also drives food insecurity in the cities: when land produces soybeans for European and Chinese livestock rather than food for Brazilian families, when water systems are captured by agribusiness rather than shared with surrounding communities, when seed sovereignty is surrendered to multinational corporations rather than held by the farmers who have cultivated those seeds for generations.







LOCALIZATION AS A LIFE-STRATEGY

For communities in the **semi-arid Caatinga** who have built cistern networks and community seed banks to survive recurring drought, localization is a life-strategy that keeps families fed when the global food system is failing or unaffordable.

For the **afro-Brazilian quilombola communities** in the Atlantic Forest and the Cerrado who have maintained ancestral land management systems through centuries of colonial violence and legal marginalization, localization is the practice that has kept their territories, cultures, and economic autonomy alive.

For urban communities in the periphery of São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, and Recife, localization is evident in the community gardens, solidarity kitchens, and agroecological markets – projects which push back against a food system that reaches their neighborhoods only in its most processed and nutritionally depleted forms, and then only at prices out of whack with local incomes.

For the **growing network of young communicators**, educators, farmers, and organizers who make up the movement, localization is the framework that makes sense of the multiple crises they face and points toward the integrated responses required.

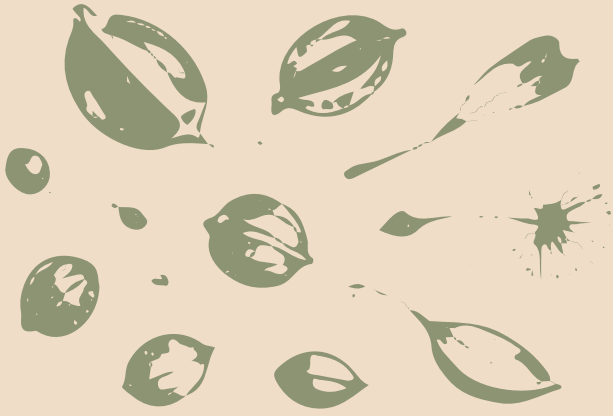
A LOCALIZATION MOVEMENT BEGINS TO TAKE SHAPE

At the centre of this movement is EcoUniversidade, working in collaboration with Local Futures over the past five years. EcoUniversidade is a Brazilian organization founded by Thais Mantovani and Carla Zorzanelli. It emerged from a realization that the education system shaping Brazil's professionals and leaders were not preparing them for the crises ahead. Instead, they were training people to maintain the very systems producing those crises. EcoUniversidade was created as an alternative: a regenerative approach to education rooted in territories, where systems thinking blends with ancestral knowledge and community-based innovation, and where life – not productivity – is at the centre.

“ECOUNIVERSIDADE PROMOTES DECENTRALIZED EDUCATION, GROUNDED IN THE BELIEF THAT EVERY PERSON, COMMUNITY, AND TERRITORY HOLDS VALUABLE KNOWLEDGE. LEARNING SHOULD NOT BE CONFINED TO INSTITUTIONS OR CONCENTRATED IN A FEW CENTERS OF POWER. THROUGH A DECOLONIZED APPROACH, WE CREATE “CLASSROOMS WITHOUT BORDERS” THAT VALUE ANCESTRAL WISDOM, LOCAL CULTURES, TERRITORIAL EXPERIENCE, AND LIVED REALITIES. LEARNING HAPPENS THROUGH EXCHANGE, LISTENING, AND RELATIONSHIPS ROOTED IN COMMUNITY AND PLACE”.

**THAÍS MANTOVANI, CO-FOUNDER,
ECOUNIVERSIDADE**





The Movimento Futuro Local (Local Future Movement) grew from simple but powerful recognition: across the country, thousands of people and groups – collectives, Indigenous communities, cooperatives, educators, regenerative farmers, solidarity economy networks, grassroots organizations – are already working toward more localized, resilient, and community-rooted ways of living. But they largely lack a shared recognition of their identity as part of a larger movement.

One of our priorities is to make the movement more visible. We use localization as a shared umbrella that connects many existing struggles and initiatives – strengthening local economies, protecting biodiversity, valuing ancestral knowledge, rebuilding community relationships, decentralizing power, and regenerating territories. Our role is to help them see one another, and to strengthen collaboration, exchange, and collective action across regions and sectors.

We also focus on showing how strong and alive this movement already is in Brazil. Through mapping, we are not only identifying initiatives, but also learning from their work – how communities mobilize, govern, produce, educate, and regenerate life locally. The goal is not just visibility, but exchange: a living process of collective intelligence that allows communities – nationally and internationally – to continue learning from one another while strengthening their own localities.

- **Movimento Futuro Local unfolds through four main strands:**

1. First, we built a network of 12 territorial multipliers. More than 380 people from across Brazil applied through an open call to people working with culture, communication, territorial regeneration, and community organizing across the country.
2. We selected two ‘multipliers’ from each Brazilian biome to ensure geographic and cultural diversity. These multipliers play an essential role in amplifying localization across Brazil, bridge-building between initiatives, and strengthening local networks.
3. We celebrated World Localization Day. Together with the multipliers, the movement invited people and organizations across the country to host local gatherings, conversations, workshops, and community events connected to localization themes. These decentralized celebrations became opportunities for communities to connect locally while simultaneously participating in a global movement, while also feeding into our mapping process.
4. We brought the Planet Local Summit to Brazil in 2026. The summit creates spaces for people from different regions and countries to meet, exchange experiences, and explore how local economies, territorial resilience, and regenerative futures can be strengthened in practice.

We are now developing a new map of local initiatives in Brazil. Building on earlier mapping efforts from 2025, it will expand to include more initiatives, making visible further practices, strategies, reflections, and learnings emerging from the territories.

CONNECTING WHAT ALREADY EXISTS

The movement is supported by a wide constellation of organizations: cooperatives, associations, and collectives already mobilize and connect thousands of farmers, producers, and community members across Brazil's biomes.

Many of these organizations have spent decades building trust in their territories that makes genuine community participation possible – the roots go deep. Agroecological networks connect smallholder farmers to local markets. Indigenous associations coordinate land management and food sovereignty across multiple communities.

Quilombola federations defend ancestral territories and collective economic practices. Urban neighbourhoods build new local food systems through gardens, solidarity kitchens, and community markets.

What they share is not a single model, but a shared practice of rebuilding life from the local ground up.

A JOURNEY ACROSS SIX BIOMES

KEY CONTRIBUTING NETWORKS

1. REDE SEMENTES DO XINGU
2. INSTITUTO FUTUROS LOCAIS
3. PROJETO AMANA
4. ASSOBIO
5. MÚTUA SYSTEM
6. PÉ DE FEIJÃO
7. ACOLHIDA NA COLÔNIA
8. AMAZÔNIA VOX
9. BRUACA
10. IMPACTHUB



Once selected, the multipliers entered a collective learning journey co-designed by EcoUniversidade and Local Futures. The first sessions focused on building trust, and creating space for people from different territories to exchange experiences, discover common challenges and aspirations. From there, the conversation expanded to the bigger picture. Through “big-picture activism”, the multipliers explored the forces driving today’s interconnected crises, the impacts of economic globalization on communities and ecosystems, and the growing range of alternatives emerging from the ground up around the world. Together, they reflected on how to communicate localization into their own native languages and territorial realities, while designing approaches adapted to each biome and community context.

The multipliers were also equipped with communication materials, facilitation resources, and practical tools to support their mobilization efforts in their territories. The result was not simply a training program, but the formation of a decentralized network of people capable of connecting global systemic understanding with the lived realities, cultures, and practices of their territories — helping localization become something experiential, relational, and grounded in place.



LOCALIZATION MULTIPLIERS



BRUNA KARIPUNA

I'm an Indigenous woman from the Karipuna people in the state of Amapá, in the Amazon biome. I believe that the Movimento Futuro Local is a pillar that will help small initiatives gain visibility in the context of confronting the climate crisis.



TUMI MATIS

I'm from the Matis people of the Vale do Javari Indigenous Territory in the Amazon biome. I work with Indigenous communication and territorial defense through UNIVAJA, and joined the Movimento Futuro Local to strengthen initiatives rooted in Indigenous territories and the protection of the forest for future generations.



SABRINA CABRAL SOUZA

I'm a Civil Engineering student at UFC, an autistic activist, and a young woman from the outskirts of Fortaleza in Northeast Brazil. I work to foster resilient and inclusive communities through initiatives like Ruma and the social consultancy Sany da Peste, connecting local realities to global impact.



ERÉ BATISTA

I'm a member of the Indigenous Tingui Botó people from Alagoas, Brazil. I am a popular educator rooted in the Freirean tradition of grassroots and community-based learning, hold a degree in History, and am currently pursuing post-graduate studies in Agroecology.



ÊMILY SÁ TELES

I'm born in the Cerrado of Goiás and raised in the Cerrado of Bahia. Throughout my journey, I have dedicated myself to supporting initiatives that promote political empowerment, sustainability, and the appreciation of local ways of life.



MIRELLA MARINO

I'm 21 years old, from Nova Xavantina in Mato Grosso, an agronomy student at UNEMAT, and the daughter of seed collectors from the Xingu Seed Network.



ÍASYPYTÃ

I'm an Indigenous member of the Potiguara people from the Atlantic Forest biome in Paraíba, Brazil, working with policies that support traditional communities through the State Secretariat for Women and Human Diversity. I joined the Movimento Futuro Local because it aligns with the territorial and community-based initiatives we are already developing across Paraíba.



TIFANNY STHEFANNY

I'm a simple person with big dreams and a strong desire to grow. I carry a deep connection to my culture, roots, and community, and I believe in the power of culture to transform lives and stories.



EDUARDA GOTZ

I'm training to become an environmental manager and socio-environmental communicator working at the intersection of climate justice, ancestral knowledge, and biome preservation in Southern Brazil. Through projects like "Boto Fé no Clima" and "Rodas de Conversa," I support local communities while promoting sustainability and local economies.



ÊMILY SÁ TELES

I'm a teacher, programmer, and poet inspired by the transformative power of art, technology, and culture. Having grown through social projects and dedicated educators, I believe small actions can lead people to extraordinary places.



DENISE SILVA

I'm a woman from the Pantanal and mother of Ana, working to create solutions that connect territory, culture, and innovation to transform local realities.



MAURA PALOCIO

Biologist currently completing a master's degree in Environmental Sciences in Cáceres, Brazil. I coordinate the Youth Network of the Pantanal Biosphere Reserve, developing community-based actions with children, women, and youth focused on protecting the Pantanal territory through education.

GATHERINGS AND CONVERSATIONS

June 2026 – The Month of Localization – became the movement’s main mobilization moment. In the lead-up to June, the multipliers invited people in their territories to come together through gatherings, conversations, cultural encounters, markets, workshops, and local celebrations. These events also became an invitation for communities and organizations to join the Brazilian localization map, helping reveal where initiatives exist, but also the visions, strategies, and forms of collective organization emerging across territories. More than documenting projects, the process sought to reveal how communities were already responding to climate, economic, and social challenges through grassroots action, local economies, and deep territorial knowledge.

Alongside the multipliers, a broader network of partner organizations, collectives, and long-standing community networks helped

spread the invitation across the country, connecting local activities to the wider global movement. The approaches varied from place to place. In some territories, gatherings took the form of dialogue circles and community conversations. In others, localization was explored through seed fairs, community markets, artistic interventions, neighbourhood conversations, storytelling gatherings, and cultural celebrations where localization was experienced through food, music, exchange, and collective presence.

In Indigenous territories, the process required particular care, respect, and cultural sensitivity, recognizing the importance of community sovereignty over knowledge and representation. The movement followed the lead of local communities and organizations, ensuring that the mapping process strengthened rather than extracted from territories.

“We are showing the world what already exists of strength in our communities. Grassroots movements have a lot to share about how to confront climate change.

— Sabrina Cabral Souza

WEAVING WHAT MATTERS

As the month of localization unfolded, another picture was beginning to take shape. Stories, insights, and initiatives from across the country were gradually woven together into the living map of local action.

Reaching across hundreds of initiatives, the mapping process led to far more than a directory of projects. It revealed a rich body of knowledge, experience, and practice that shows the scale and diversity of the local economies that Brazil has been building -

quietly and persistently - even as the dominant economic story has insisted that only the global economy counts.

These insights came together at the Planet Local Summit in São Paulo in June. Insights from the shared mapping journey were brought into dialogue with local inhabitants, community activists, policymakers, funders, as well as international allies, creating opportunities to learn from what is already working on the ground.

STORIES FROM THE GROUND

What follows is a selection of initiatives from across Brazil — stories that reveal the many forms that local economies take, the knowledge they embody, and the resilience they have shown in the face of ongoing economic pressure.

Fulo



- **REDE DE SEMENTES DO XINGU**

AMAZÔNIA - Xingu Territory — Mato Grosso and Pará, Brazil

The Xingu Seed Network coordinates the collection, distribution and sale of native Cerrado and Amazon seeds for ecological restoration using the “muvuca” technique, which involves sowing these seeds onto degraded land for ecological restoration. In addition to seed collection and distribution, the initiative provides training for seed collectors, promotes agroforestry systems, and strengthens the recovery of traditional food practices within communities.

The network emerged in response to the deforestation, environmental degradation and destruction of traditional ways of life of the Amazon.

The network strengthens local economies by generating income through the collection and sale of native seeds. It helps communities remain in their territories, while supporting ecological restoration. Because seed collectors don't just collect seeds – they also play a key role in monitoring and caring for their territories.

At the same time, the initiative contributes to valuing standing forests and strengthening community wellbeing through the revival of traditional food practices.

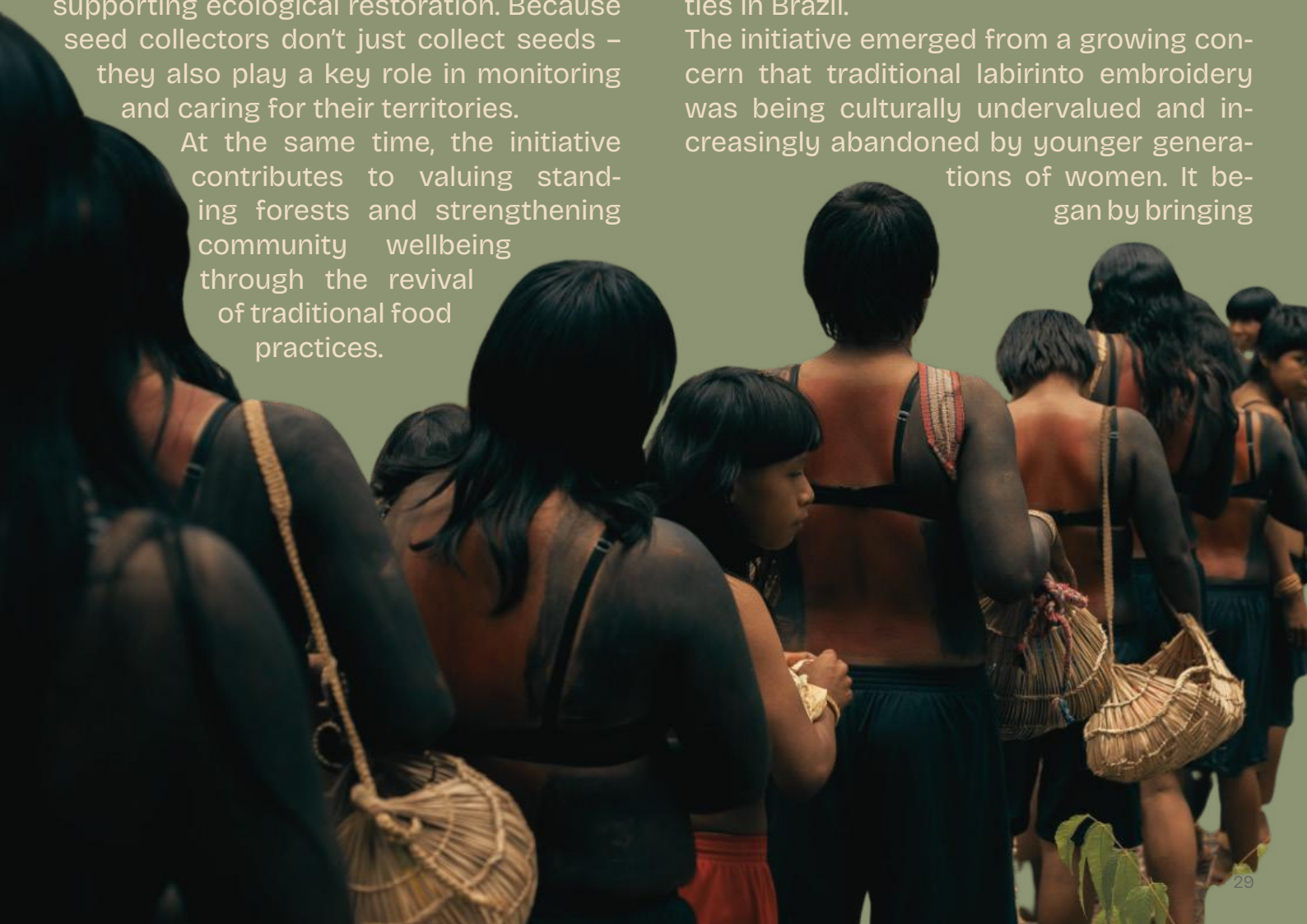
The Network operates with a governance structure that was collectively built with seed collectors, strengthening decision-making processes rooted in the communities themselves. The initiative also maintains a clear distinction between the commercial and social dimensions of its work, with different sustainability strategies for each area.

- **CÉU DE LABIRINTOS**

CAATINGA — Ceará, Brazil

Céu de Labirintos was created in 2023 by women from marginalized communities focused on strengthening the cultural, economic, and collective power of labirinteadoras – women artisans who work with the traditional “labirinto” embroidery technique. The initiative is primarily composed of Black women and supports women's collectives across different beaches and municipalities in Brazil.

The initiative emerged from a growing concern that traditional labirinto embroidery was being culturally undervalued and increasingly abandoned by younger generations of women. It began by bringing



embroiderers together each week to strengthen community bonds, support one another, and give visibility to their handmade work through social media.

Over time, the movement expanded its work through partnerships with local associations, reusing fabrics and old embroidery pieces to create new products while encouraging women's entrepreneurship rooted in local culture. Today, the gatherings also function as community support spaces where women exchange knowledge about bureaucracy, health, self-esteem, and emotional wellbeing.

The initiative responds to the lack of recognition for women's labor, the absence of support for women entrepreneurs, and the invisibility of traditional embroidery as both cultural and economic heritage. In doing so, it boosts local livelihoods, and further strengthens local economies through cultural tourism, while helping recover the identity and collective memory of communities.

Céu de Labirintos also promotes exchanges with art schools and traveling workshops across Brazil, boosting women's confidence, while increasing the cultural and economic recognition of labirinto embroidery as a living heritage rooted in the territories where it is practiced.

Maria vão com as outras sim

- **MARIAS VÃO COM AS OUTRAS SIM**

CERRADO — Sarzedo, Minas Gerais, Brazil

Marias Vão Com as Outras Sim was created during the pandemic by women from Sarzedo, Minas Gerais, who began sharing knowledge and building collective ways of generating income, strengthening local economies through agroecology, solidarity economy, composting, urban agriculture, and community care.

Led mainly by black women, the collective strengthens women's autonomy, and foment healthy food production, solidarity economy, and territorial regeneration through workshops, agroecological fairs, medicinal plants, and community education.

During World Localization Day 2025, the group organized agroecological gatherings and composting workshops connecting women, youth, and local movements.

Its work is built through partnerships with universities, agroecological networks, public institutions, and social organizations, creating opportunities for knowledge exchange, and community-based income generation.

- **ASSOCIAÇÃO BRASILEIRA DE COMPOSTAGEM (ABCOMPOSTAGEM)**

BRAZIL — National Network

The Brazilian Composting Association (ABCompostagem) emerged during the COVID-19 pandemic through virtual gatherings and collaborative networks connecting composters across Brazil. Officially founded in 2022, the association brings together composting initiatives, environmental educators, technicians, researchers, and local entrepreneurs working with organic waste management in all Brazilian biomes.

The network works to strengthen composting as a tool for environmental regeneration, community education, local food systems, and decentralized waste solutions.

Today, ABCompostagem supports local composting networks, promotes technical exchange, advocates for public policies, and strengthens community-based composting initiatives across the country.

The association also works on developing monitoring and collective intelligence tools, including a national composting observatory to expand the social, environmental, and economic impact of the sector.

- **ASSOCIAÇÃO INDÍGENA DA COMUNIDADE KALUANI (AICK)**

AMAZONIA — Xingu Indigenous Territory, Mato Grosso, Brazil

The Indigenous Association of the Kaluani Community (AICK) works in the Xingu Indigenous Territory to strengthen territorial autonomy, traditional food systems, cultural preservation, and community governance. Kaluani Community was founded in 2005, and the association was officially established in 2018 as part of the community's efforts to protect its territory and strengthen collective life.

Led by Indigenous peoples from the Kuikuro and Kalapalo communities, the initiative promotes traditional food practices based on family farming, fishing, agroforestry gardens, medicinal plants, and the intergenerational transmission of ancestral knowledge. Children and youth take part in activities connected to territorial stewardship, collective fishing, handicrafts, and conversations with elders.

In recent years, the community has also worked with integrated fire management, territorial monitoring, and environmental awareness in response to climate change and increasing wildfires, strengthening Indigenous autonomy and the protection of sacred territories and traditional ways of life.

Its work is carried forward through community gatherings, dialogue circles, territorial mapping, integrated fire management,

and the strengthening of youth and women's leadership — bringing together culture, food systems, territory, and economic autonomy.

- **INSTITUTO FULÔ – FUTUROS LOCAIS**

ATLANTIC FOREST AND CERRADO — Ubatuba, São Paulo, Brazil

Founded by Aline Matulja and Felipe Esteves, Instituto Fulô – Futuros Locais works to strengthen local food systems by connecting organic and agroecological farmers directly with consumers. The organization emerged during the COVID-19 pandemic, when many farmers lost access to local markets and struggled to manage sales through informal digital channels. In response, the team created Faz a Feira, a participatory digital platform designed alongside farmers to support direct sales, harvest planning, order management, and customer relationships.

Building on this experience, the organization launched Compra do Mês, a community-based collective purchasing initiative that helps families access organic food at more affordable prices while strengthening local economies. Through neighborhood-based purchasing groups, consumers can buy directly from producers, reducing intermediary costs and increasing support for regenerative agriculture.

The initiative responds to two interconnected challenges: improving market access for small-scale organic farmers and expanding access to healthy food for families. At the same time, it strengthens community ties by turning food distribution into opportunities for cooperation, volunteering, and local organizing.

The initiative also relies on volunteer-led mutirões (mutual help for the common good) to sort and distribute food orders, creating spaces for exchange, collaboration, and community building.

- **AGÊNCIA POPULAR SOLANO TRINDADE**
ATLANTIC FOREST — Campo Limpo and Capão Redondo, São Paulo, Brazil

Founded in the southern marginalized areas of São Paulo, [Agência Popular Solano Trindade](#) strengthens local economies through culture, entrepreneurship, solidarity and food justice. The initiative emerged from grassroots movements in Campo Limpo and Capão Redondo and has become known for its community-led approach to development.

A central focus of the agency is democratizing access to healthy food in territories often described as ‘food deserts’. Through the Armazém Organicamente and partnerships with family farmers from southern São Paulo, the initiative connects marginalized communities with affordable organic food while shortening supply chains and strengthening local producers. The work combines food access, income generation, environmental awareness, and cultural transformation, challenging the idea that organic food should only be available to wealthier populations.

By combining culture, entrepreneurship, and community food systems, Solano Trindade shows how local economies can generate income, strengthen community identity, and improve quality of life. Through cultural festivals, community businesses, organic food distribution, delivery networks, and collective economic organizing, it keeps resources circulating locally while strengthening both livelihoods and access to healthy food.

- **ACOLHIDA NA COLÔNIA**
ATLANTIC FOREST — Serra Geral Region, Santa Catarina, Brazil

[Acolhida na Colônia](#) works to strengthen family farming through agroecology and community-based rural tourism in the Atlantic Forest region of southern Brazil. Founded

27 years ago, the initiative emerged in a territory marked by rural outmigration, gender inequality, dependence on tobacco production, and the impacts of intensive pesticide use on farmers’ health. It began by facilitating a transition to agroecology among local farming families and later expanded to strengthen small-scale food processing, rural tourism, and local value chains.

Tourism serves not only as a complementary source of income but also as a tool for valuing family farming, strengthening community identity, and creating meaningful exchanges between visitors and rural communities.

Acolhida has also played an important role in expanding women’s economic autonomy, supporting their leadership in tourism, handicrafts, and farm management, while encouraging younger generations to remain connected to rural life and agricultural production.

Through its network-based approach, the initiative generates economic benefits that extend beyond its direct members, contributing to stronger and more resilient territorial economies.

- **BRUACA**
PANTANAL — Southern Pantanal, Mato Grosso do Sul, Brazil

Founded and led by women deeply connected to the territory, including Indigenous and riverside leaders, [Bruaca](#) works in the Southern Pantanal to value traditional knowledge, strengthen local production, expand access to fair markets, and preserve the cultural heritage of the Pantanal.

Bruaca’s work is guided by its own Raízes Methodology, which begins with deep listening and cultural identity, bringing communities together to create new local economic opportunities. The organization supports communities in accessing public policies, funding opportunities, marketing networks, and institutional partnerships,

while also providing technical, legal, and organizational support. By strengthening community autonomy and leadership, Bruaca helps local groups develop their own projects, enterprises, and strategies for shaping the future of their territories.

The initiative emerged in a context shaped by such challenges as climate change, food insecurity, limited access to markets, and the absence of local knowledge within formal education systems. Through its work, Bruaca strengthens the self-esteem, autonomy, and economic opportunities of historically marginalized groups, particularly women, Indigenous peoples, and riverside communities. In turn, this strengthens community relationships, greater care for the biome, and the continuity of traditional cultures and ways of life.



Ag Solano Trindade



THREADING BIOMES

If the stories documented in this chapter reveal what is growing in Brazil, the seeds for the future lie in the connections, insights, and emerging possibilities that the Futuro Local Movement has catalyzed and helped bring into view. Several are worth naming—not as predictions but as emerging directions where small shifts are already beginning to ripple outward.

One of the unexpected discoveries of the mapping process was the degree to which communities facing similar challenges in different biomes had developed remarkably similar responses, often without knowing of each other's existence. Seed-saving networks in the Caatinga and the Cerrado are using strikingly similar organizational models. Community water governance systems in the semi-arid Northeast echo the collective resource management practices of Pantaneiro fishing communities thousands of kilometres away. Urban agroecological initiatives on the outskirts of São Paulo are grappling with the same questions around land tenure, supply chains, and institutional support as rural cooperatives in the Amazon basin.

The Futuro Local Movement has created the conditions for these communities to find each other on a national scale—to exchange knowledge, strategies, and solidarity across the geographic and cultural distance that has kept them apart. The next step is to deepen these exchanges: fostering lasting learning relationships between communities across biomes, creating spaces where ideas developed in one territory can be adapted and tested in another, and building the trans-territorial bonds that a national localization movement needs if it is to thrive.

The mapping started in 2025 and continued this year, and was never intended as a final product. It marks the beginning rather than the end of an ongoing process.

Over time, the mapping project will tell the story of how initiatives evolve, what helps them thrive and the challenges they face. It will be testament to the scale and resilience of Brazil's local economies and communities.

Most importantly, beyond mapping, this initiative is weaving a network to enact a localization transformation across Brazil.



GERMANY

Towards Community Sufficiency



European Goldfinch





LOOKING FOR COMMUNITY BACK HOME

My name is Julio, and I am 30 years old. I grew up in a rural part of Northern Germany, where I recently returned to live. Since childhood, I have been passionate about gardening and have always loved spending time in nature. I studied pedagogy and have worked as a primary school teacher in Germany, Switzerland, and Romania. In recent years I have shifted to working part-time in order to make space for political and environmental activism.

Currently, I am active as a delegate for the Youth Branch of the Global Ecovillage Network (NextGEN) and, together with a friend, have started a podcast called From Pain to Hope, with a special focus on peace work in ecovillages.

My journey into localization began when I read *Ancient Futures* by Helena Norberg-Hodge at the age of fifteen. A decade later, after living in Romania and witnessing both the richness of a traditional agrarian culture and the speed with which it was disappearing, I realized that the lessons from that book are relevant not only across the world, but in my own region.

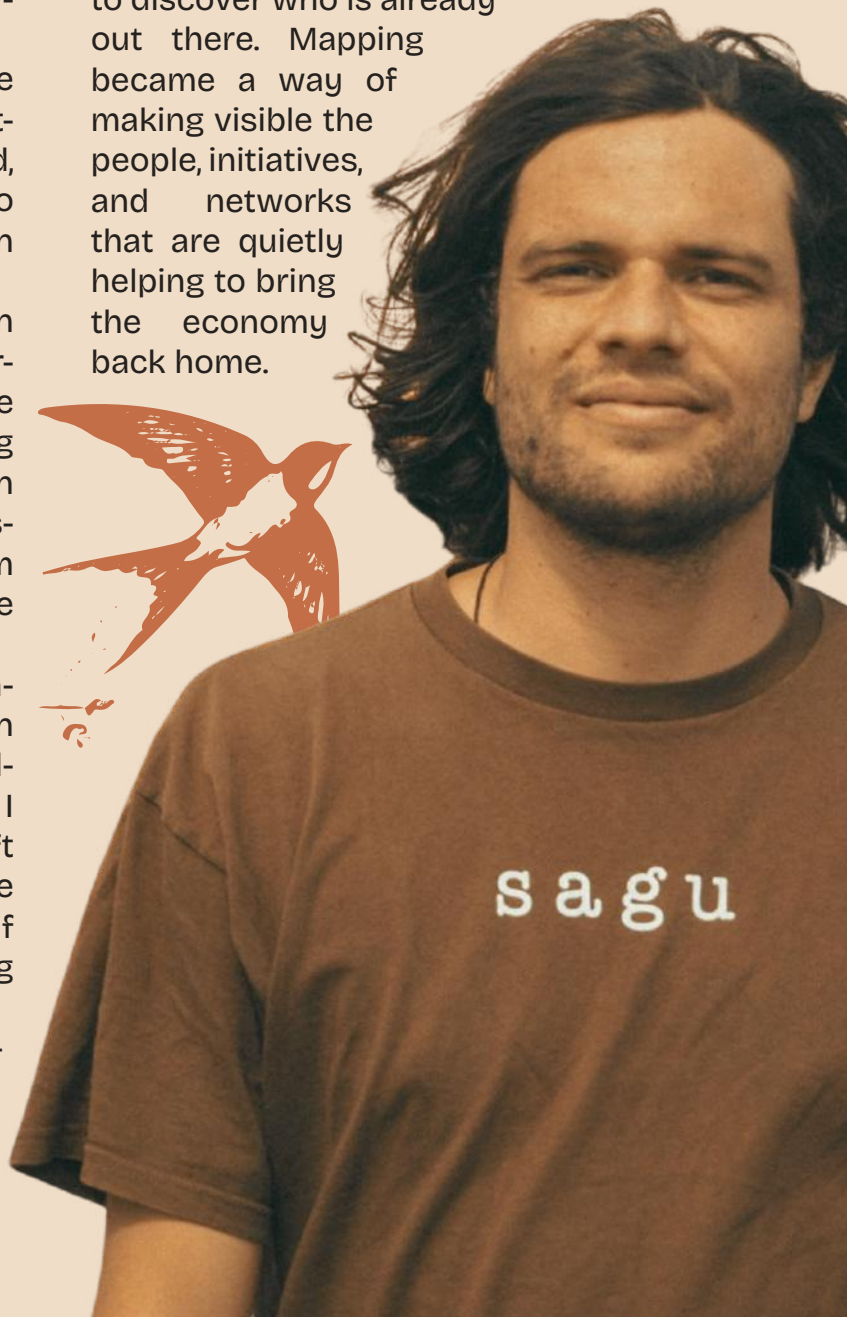
This realization eventually led me to volunteer at the Planet Local Summit in Ladakh in 2025. There, while taking part in everyday village life and shared fieldwork in Tar village, I experienced a sense of community that left a deep impression on me. Returning home to rural northern Germany, I found myself carrying a simple question: could something similar exist here?

For most of my life, I have been passionate about gardening and self-reliance. My family has long grown much of its own food and worked toward greater indepen-

dence in energy and water. Yet over time, I came to see that complete self-sufficiency is neither realistic nor necessarily desirable. The deeper lesson I learned from working with ecovillages, and spending time in traditional communities, was that the goal is not self-sufficiency but community sufficiency: meeting our needs through relationships of cooperation, mutual support, and shared responsibility.

In the spring of 2026, while reflecting on how to connect with more people who shared these values, I was invited by Local Futures to join an international mapping project for World Localization Day. The invitation felt like a natural next step.

If community sufficiency begins with relationships, then the first task is simply to discover who is already out there. Mapping became a way of making visible the people, initiatives, and networks that are quietly helping to bring the economy back home.



How can we communicate localization beyond our immediate circles?

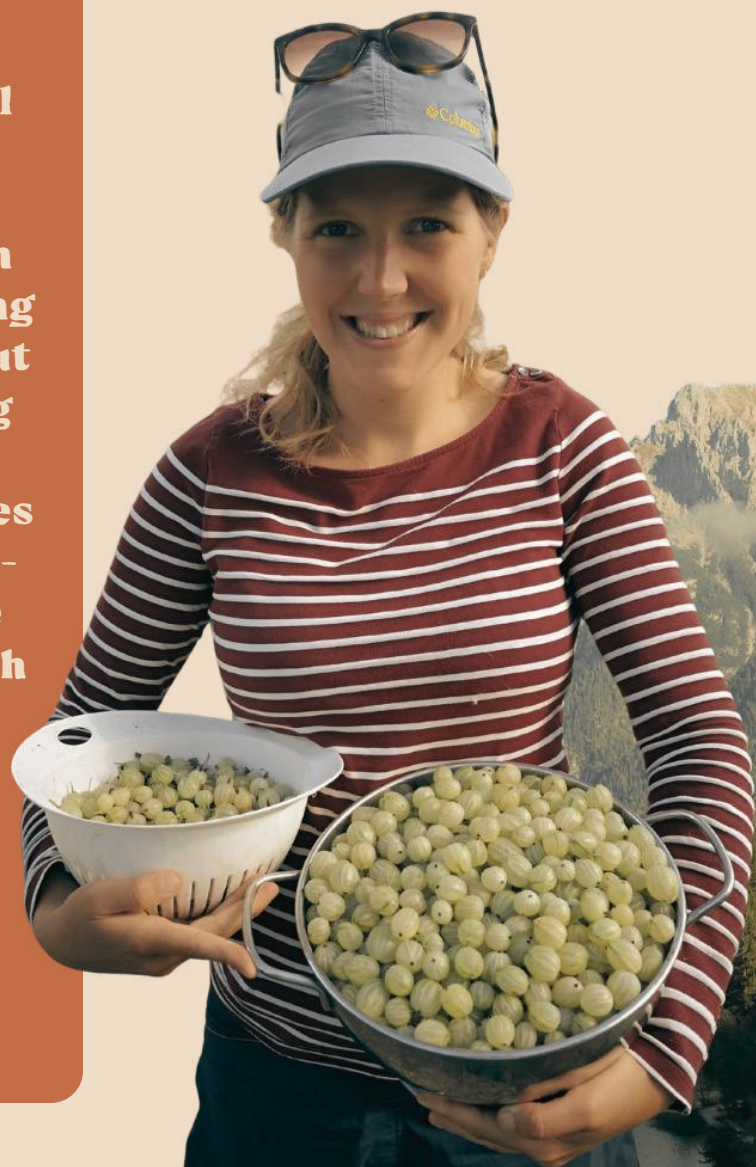
What helped me was a simple realization: the globalized economy tells us that competition, efficiency, and individual success matter most. Yet when people face illness, grief, or mortality, very different things come to the forefront — relationships, belonging, and meaning. Many of the things that contribute most to human (and planetary) wellbeing are strengthened by localization, while they are often weakened by the global economic system.

Perhaps the challenge of communicating localization is not only about presenting alternatives, but also about more consciously helping people imagine that human beings and societies could function differently — and that we could all be so much happier.

- Julio Greenway

LOCALIZATION IN GERMANY

Germany has a long history of diverse movements that are close to the idea of localization. Many of the underlying ideas emerged in the 1970s through environmental movements, organic farming, anti-nuclear protests and alternative economic initiatives that questioned industrial agriculture, consumer culture and dependence on global markets. Alongside these efforts, numerous initiatives have worked to strengthen local economies, support independent businesses, and keep value rooted in place. In Germany, this broader aspiration is often expressed through the concept of 'regionalism'.



BUNDESVERBAND DER REGIONALBEWEGUNG

One of the most important organizations supporting this work is the Bundesverband der Regionalbewegung (Federal Association of the Regional Movement). Founded in 2005, it brings together around 360 member organizations and serves as a national platform for networking and knowledge-sharing. Its work focuses on strengthening regional value chains, local economies, small and medium-sized businesses, democratic participation, regional identity, and sustainable development, particularly through regional food systems.

One of its most visible initiatives is Tag der Regionen (Day of the Regions), an annual nationwide celebration of regional economies. Each autumn, farms, municipalities, schools, associations, and citizen groups organize markets, workshops, festivals, and educational events that highlight local production and regional value creation. Today, more than 1,000 events take place across Germany every year, reaching over one million people.

The association also supports practical tools such as the REGIOapp, which helps consumers find nearby farm shops, farmers' markets, regional food retailers, and restaurants sourcing locally. In addition, it works to increase

the use of regional food in schools, hospitals, and other public institutions.

At its core, the [Regionalbewegung](#) seeks to make the local visible by helping communities recognize the economic, social, and ecological value that already exists within their regions while strengthening connections between producers, consumers, and place.

While this may seem quite impressive, many people involved in efforts to strengthen local economies feel that a broader cultural and political shift is still missing. Despite growing political rhetoric around sustainability and regional resilience, the main focus is still on increasing economic growth and strengthening export and international trade. As a person that is close to the network "Regionalbewegung", told me:

"POLITICIANS WILL ONE DAY TALK ABOUT SUSTAINABILITY AND REGIONAL RESILIENCE, THE NEXT DAY, HOWEVER, THEY WILL WORK ON EXPORT STRATEGIES."



MAPPING LOCALIZATION: FROM REGIONAL TO HYPERLOCAL

When I began looking for initiatives in my region, I initially planned to create a map from scratch. But in the process, I discovered how extensively many of the localization initiatives are already mapped digitally. There is a surprisingly dense ecosystem of [collaborative maps](#) documenting local alternatives, commons-based infrastructure and sustainability projects.

One of these is [Karte von Morgen](#) ("Map of Tomorrow"), a collaborative platform that maps initiatives working toward ecological and social transformation, from local food projects and educational initiatives to ethical businesses and citizen-led enterprises.

Community members can submit entries, while regional moderators help ensure quality and



prevent greenwashing. The result is a living map that helps people discover and connect with local alternatives.

At the same time, an important pattern emerged: urban areas are generally mapped far more thoroughly than rural ones. Many initiatives in villages and small towns remain largely invisible, even when they play a vital role in community life.

This realization helped clarify the focus of my own project.

Rather than creating yet another map, I wanted to strengthen what already existed. I decided to focus on a "hyperlocal" territory: the [Wildeshauser Geest](#), a rural bioregion and nature park surrounding my hometown of Twistringen. Spanning roughly 40 kilometres across, it is a landscape that can be explored by bicycle within a day.

My goal was not simply to identify initiatives, but to help strengthen the connections between them. I wanted to contribute to what I have come to think of as community sufficiency: the ability of people to meet more of their needs through relationships of mutual support, cooperation, and shared responsibility.

THE MAPPING JOURNEY

One of the most practical parts of my mapping journey began with a simple question: if local food is so important, why is it often so difficult to find local producers?

To help address this, I partnered with the Regionalbewegung and began adding farm shops, markets, and local producers from my region to the REGIOapp, a platform that helps people discover nearby sources of local food.

To help bridge that gap, I created a Telegram group where people could learn about the mapping project, localization as a strategy for change, and connect with others in the region who shared similar values. My hope was that it could become a space for exchange, encouragement, and collaboration.

What started as an individual effort gradually became a collective one. People pointed me toward producers I had never heard of, introduced me to local initiatives, and shared ideas for strengthening the regional economy. A former teacher connected me with a local food and education project whose team had already compiled an extensive list of farm shops in the region, while others helped spread information through local networks and farmers' markets.

GROWING A RESILIENT COMMUNITY

Finding local food through an app is a good first step. But, I found myself asking a deeper question: how can we rebuild the kinds of relationships that make communities resilient? With that in mind, I began exploring the idea of a local "garden community" — a network of people who grow food, exchange knowledge,

share seedlings and harvests, and support one another when help is needed. I started simply. I visited people I already knew, asked them to introduce me to others, and spent time helping out in their gardens. Usually, we would work side by side while talking about food, community, and the challenges of living more locally. Before long, each conversation led to another, and I had more people to visit than I could keep up with. To help connect these gardeners, I used a Telegram group that I set up where people could exchange ideas, ask for help, and learn about the wider localization movement. I also began mapping gardens and projects using the "Map of Tomorrow" (Karte von Morgen). With the support of the map's founder, Helmut Wohlmann,

MANY OF THE PEOPLE I MET WERE ALREADY PRACTICING LOCALIZATION IN THEIR DAILY LIVES, BUT FEW WERE AWARE OF THE WIDER MOVEMENT WORKING TOWARD SIMILAR GOALS.



I became a regional moderator for the Wildeshauser Geest area and created the hashtag #gartencommunity to make garden projects easier to find. Many people were excited by the idea of a mutual-support network rooted in place. Some preferred not to appear on a public map, and others did not use Telegram, but the conversations revealed a real appetite for connection. Here are a few of the people and projects that have joined the Regio-app and #gartencommunity:

STORIES FROM THE GROUND

**“IN SOME WAY WE LIVE IN
A SOCIETY WHERE WE HAVE
EVERYTHING THAT WE DON’T
NEED BUT NOTHING THAT WE DO
NEED.”**

- PROJECT INTERVIEWEE



- **HOF WESSEL IN GROSS RINGMAR**

Hof Wessel is a small-scale family farm. They sell free-range eggs from a mobile chicken coop, as well as homemade pasta and a range of meat products from their farm.

Like in many rural places in Germany, their small farm shop is self-service and trust-based. This way, they do not have to be in the shop all the time. Customers simply take what they need and leave the money.

They told me how it had been a process of many years to get permission to keep free-range pigs. They persisted, however, because they wanted to do things differently and take care of the wellbeing of their animals. I was surprised to learn that doing something good for your animals and for the ecosystem of your farm can be so difficult because of bureaucratic regulations.

- **MILCHTANKSTELLE HOF RASCHE IN MÖRSEN**

“Milchtankstelle” could be translated as a “petrol station for milk”. Customers simply bring their own bottles, insert cash into a vending machine, press a button, and fill up with fresh milk. There is no plastic waste, and the milk is sold directly from the farm to the customer.

This particular dairy farm places a strong emphasis on animal welfare and tries to source any additional feed that it cannot produce itself from the surrounding region whenever possible.

The owner told me how happy she is that people from many different backgrounds and nationalities use this unique opportunity to buy fresh milk, especially because she has kept the price affordable. At the same time, her profit is higher because she sells directly to customers without any intermediaries.

With a smile on her face, she told me that some customers even come and buy 40 litres at a time in order to make their own cheese. The Milchtankstelle has also become a meeting place where people stop to chat,

exchange stories, and share a laugh. She loves the warmth that direct contact with customers brings to her life.

In the small self-service shop, they also sell other regional products from nearby farms.

- **CSA “WILDES GEMÜSE” (WILD VEGETABLES)**

The Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Wildes Gemüse was founded in 2021 and works together with the organic Biohof Dolling in Beckstedt. To me, the project is one of the most inspiring examples I encountered of how ecological farming, strengthening economic resilience, and community building can go hand in hand. Members collectively support the farm and receive a share of the harvest, while risks and rewards are shared among everyone involved. Participation in farm work is voluntary, but many people contribute because they enjoy being in community with others and having conversations while working together in the fields.

I also had the opportunity to interview Jonas from the Dolling family about their community supported agriculture model.

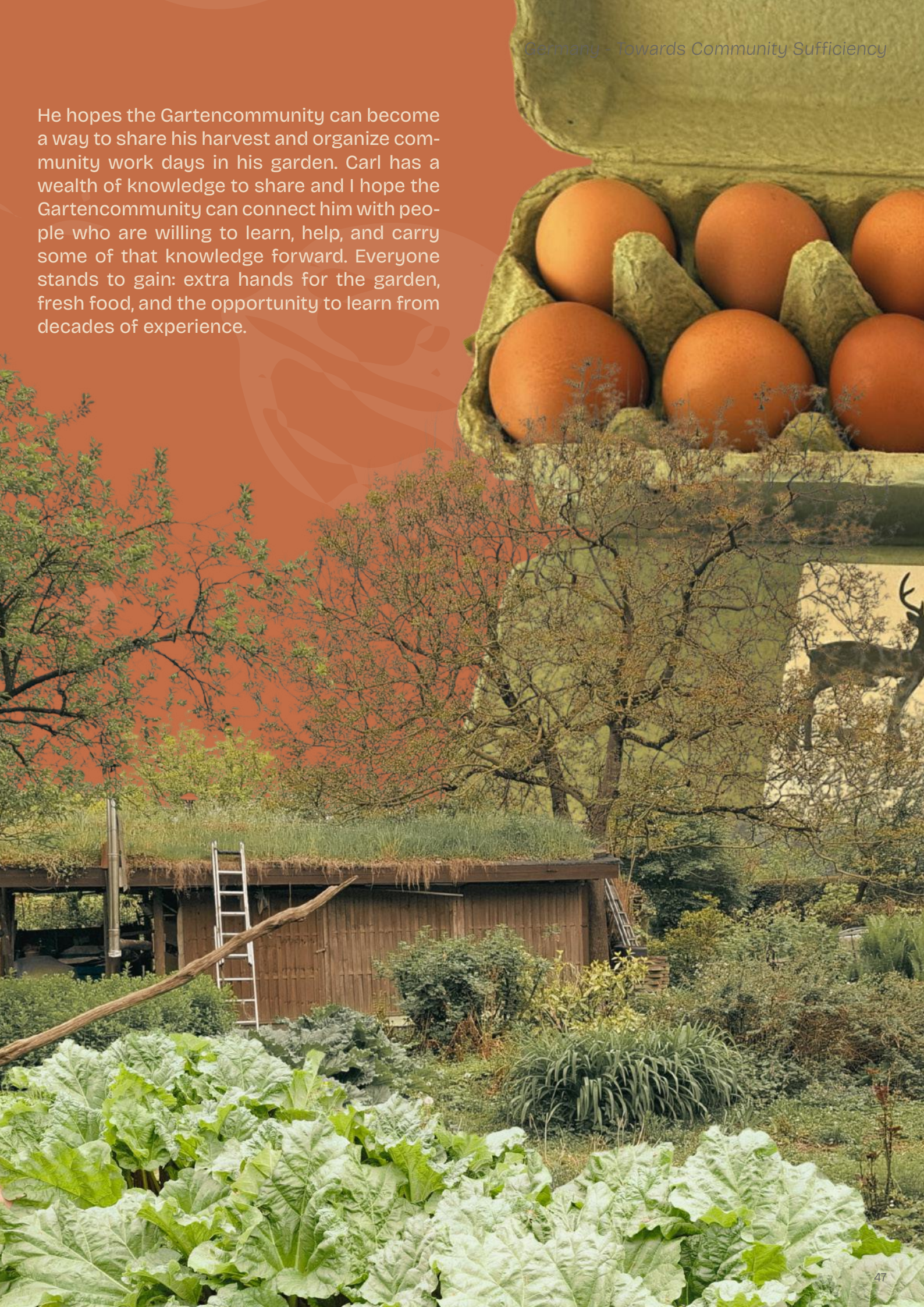
- **CARL FUNKE FROM NEUENMARHORST**

One of the first people I got to know was Carl Funke. He lives only five kilometres from my home, yet I discovered him through the Map of Tomorrow. What struck me immediately was how many interests we shared despite never having met.

Carl is in his early seventies, and over the last 40 years he and his partner have transformed 1.6 hectares of former farmland into an abundant food forest and vegetable garden that includes more than fifty different apple varieties. It is the most impressive garden I have ever seen - it was even featured on German television.

Unfortunately, Carl no longer has the energy to care for the land to the extent he would like, and much of his abundant apple harvest goes to waste every year.

He hopes the Gartencommunity can become a way to share his harvest and organize community work days in his garden. Carl has a wealth of knowledge to share and I hope the Gartencommunity can connect him with people who are willing to learn, help, and carry some of that knowledge forward. Everyone stands to gain: extra hands for the garden, fresh food, and the opportunity to learn from decades of experience.



• THE ESSGARTEN IN WINKELSETT

Another amazing garden that I discovered was the “[Essgarten](#)” (Eating Garden) in Winkelsett, which is only about 7 km from my home. Just as with Carl, it was shocking to realize that I had somehow missed this fascinating project for over 20 years.

The Essgarten offers monthly public tours and cultivates more than 1,200 species of edible plants on 2.5 hectares. Established over 30 years ago, it describes itself as one of Germany’s oldest forest gardens.

In addition to the tours, they offer homemade fruit jellies, jams, and juices made from the many fruit trees in their garden. Because the land has become so rich in biodiversity, many different species of insects and birds now inhabit the area, which is why they have also started offering birdwatching tours.

What they have too much of every year are walnuts and chestnuts. As I have already given them seedlings this year, they are happy to share some of their harvest later in the season.

TO ME, IT IS INCREDIBLY EYE-OPENING TO REALIZE HOW MUCH MORE ABUNDANCE EVERYONE CAN HAVE WHEN PEOPLE SIMPLY SHARE WHAT THEY HAVE TOO MUCH OF.



• ALLMENDE WALDGARTEN NEAR VERDEN

One of the most memorable people I got to know recently is Kaj from the [Allmende Waldgarten](#) (Allmende Forest Garden) near Verden. Although he actually lives almost an hour’s drive from my hometown, it seemed worth the drive.

What is special about Kaj’s organization is its strong focus on working with young people. They also regularly cooperate with students from various universities and aid with research projects related to forest gardens.

Two points from our conversation in particular have stayed with me:

The first was about giving. Kaj told me that he questions the assumption that every exchange must involve something in return. Through collaborations with initiatives such as Essen für Alle (Food for All), fruit from their forest garden is harvested, turned into jam, and then freely shared with others. Kaj describes how this process of simply giving creates a special atmosphere of community and mutual appreciation that can bring people together in a unique way. The second was about polarization. Kaj spoke openly about his concern regarding the rise of right-wing extremism in Germany. He believes that strengthening community and care within local neighbourhoods is one of the best ways to counteract this trend, and I could not agree more.

My conversation with Kaj has influenced the way I think about the Gartencommunity. Exchange can be practical, but giving freely is also something very special and creates value in an entirely different way.

• HAUKE AND SILKE: SHARING LAND AND GROWING COMMUNITY

Hauke and Silke, whom I got to know during the Covid years, are passionate about permaculture and have spent the last five years growing food and keeping chickens and sheep on a small scale. Two years ago, their lives changed significantly. They had to leave their home and permaculture garden, and shortly afterwards Silke’s uncle passed away.

They unexpectedly inherited a conventionally managed farm with several farmhouses, stables, and around four hectares of land.

At first, they were unsure what to do with so much land. Soon, however, they began imagining how it could be transformed and managed in a regenerative way. One insight emerged quickly: truly sustainable and diverse land stewardship requires more people. Without enough hands, there is greater reliance on machinery and less opportunity to cultivate a wide variety of crops. Beyond practical considerations, they also recognized that ecological regeneration and social regeneration are closely connected. Out of these reflections, an idea emerged: what if parts of the land could be shared with people from nearby towns and cities?

This year, we started with a simple experiment. I planted quinoa and kale on one of their fields, and the idea is that we care for the crops together and later share the harvest. As a young family with two children, Hauke and Silke lack the time to cultivate as much food as they would like. I, meanwhile, do not have enough space to experiment with larger crops such as grains.

By sharing the land, the work, and eventually the harvest, we all gain a greater sense of abundance. We hope this approach can inspire others and contribute to new ways of using and stewarding land collectively.

• CLAN B ECOVILLAGE

Another inspiring project that recently joined the Gartencommunity is [Clan B](#), an intentional community and ecovillage located in a former youth hostel between Bremen and Oldenburg.

The community brings together people from different backgrounds who share an interest in sustainability, mutual support, and collective learning. Rather than focusing solely on ecological practices, Clan B places a strong emphasis on the social dimension of sustainability. Members experiment with sociocratic forms of deci-

sion-making, shared responsibility, and ways of building relationships based on trust, dialogue, and cooperation. They see community not as a fixed model but as an ongoing learning process. Their values also include connecting with other communities and regional initiatives and actively helping to shape their neighbourhood and wider region.

On their grounds, which include meadows, woodland, guest rooms, seminar spaces, and communal facilities, they have created a hub for workshops, cultural events, small enterprises, ecological projects, and shared learning experiences.

• REGIONALES UMWELTZENTRUM IN HOLLEN

The name "[Regionales Umweltzentrum](#)" can be translated into English as "Regional Environmental Centre". They are located in the countryside, have a large garden, and are situated close to several farms. School classes from nearby towns visit them to learn about their local environment, where food comes from, and how plants grow. They also regularly visit farms together with members of the organisation. Many of the activities they organize for school classes are practical and hands-on.



I got to know them through another project they are involved in. Every month, people with disabilities and volunteers come together to work in the garden. The project is called “Natürlich gemeinsam” (Naturally Together).

The work they are doing seems extremely important to me because it connects young people with their local environment and brings together people from different walks of life.

FROM MAPPING TO COMMUNITY

What is really startling to me is that I have lived alongside all these amazing people and projects for so many years without ever getting to know them. I can't wait for us to all meet up in one of our gardens and do community work together and am excited to see what will emerge from the seeds that have been sown - both in the ground and in the social fabric!

Will we be able to recreate a similar sense of community to the one I experienced during the community harvest in Ladakh? I can't wait to find out.



Wildes Gemüse







Black-and-red
Broadbill

VIETNAM

Reviving Wisdom and Place

By **Hoang Ho Huu Huy**

Vcil Community





A NEW STORY FOR VIETNAM

Hi, I'm Huy. I currently work at Vcil Community in the role of a regenerative storyteller and coordinator. Vcil Community is a community and network of people advocating for a paradigm shift, working at the levels of personal and systemic change to create a wellbeing society.

I chose this path because I recognized that we urgently need different narratives and viable alternatives to our current way of life. To tell new stories and architect a new world, we must be deeply aware of the systemic issues within our current structures, as well as the emerging works moving towards a new civilization. As a regenerative storyteller, I can do the work that I think the world needs right now.

At Vcil Community, we are dedicated to fostering a paradigm shift towards wellbeing and regeneration, and localization has been one of our core approaches for over a decade. We choose this approach because we see the big picture of the industrial globalized

capitalist economy and its systemic consequences; concurrently, we recognize the comprehensiveness and profound rationality of localization as a viable solution.

Since 2023, Vcil Community has actively focused on building a robust network in Vietnam, and we initiated our mapping process at that time. We realize that creating a localization map right now aligns perfectly with our ongoing trajectory, serving as a strategic and vital step to popularize and expand the localization movement throughout Vietnam.



LOCALIZATION IN VIETNAM

Vietnam is a country that has experienced very rapid GDP growth in recent decades, following the economic reform and opening up of the economy (Đổi Mới) in 1986.

Currently, Vietnam has signed 17 Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) with various countries and economic unions, driving a faster and more extensive globalization process. This is happening while the domestic economy is not yet solidly built. With a 20% reliance on

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), many economic resources are not retained locally, resulting in significant economic leakage. In terms of the value chain, by participating in the global economy, the surplus value lies merely in low-cost labor; we have not yet created high economic value within the supply chain. Remaining a small link in the global economy leads to dependence and vulnerability to other nations.

Given this macro context, localization is a practical and essential action for Vietnam to become self-reliant and increase its immunity against global fluctuations. This is also a crucial period,

AS THE OLDER GENERATION—THOSE WHO STILL PRESERVE INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE, LOCAL WISDOM, CULTURAL LIFESTYLES, AND PROFOUND VALUES—REMAINS STRONG.

The memories of previous generations and the relationship with nature still exist, for the time being. We still possess the ecological foundations needed to preserve seeds and regenerate soil, water, and ecosystems.

Despite all the changes, Vietnam still retains its cultural values—the spirit of sharing, gen-

erosity, indigenous knowledge, and a deep connection to nature remain clearly evident. In times of national hardship, such as natural disasters or pandemics, Vietnamese people have voluntarily contributed rice, food, time, and money to support the government's efforts in fighting disease and overcoming catastrophes. These are deeply rooted cultural values, yet they are at risk of gradually disappearing as urbanization and globalization accelerate.

Therefore,

THIS IS THE GOLDEN TIME FOR VIETNAM TO EMBRACE LOCALIZATION: TO PROTECT, TRANSMIT, AND CARRY FORWARD OUR HERITAGE, BUILDING A SOLID FOUNDATION FOR THE FUTURE AHEAD.

Thiên Sinh Farm



THE MAPPING JOURNEY

This mapping journey wasn't completed in a matter of days or months. It is the accumulation of years spent working toward a paradigm shift. Over the years, we have continuously looked for like-minded people, projects, and community initiatives to collaborate with. Through this process, we have met wonderful people and witnessed their incredible work. Our methodology usually starts with research to get a broad understanding of an initiative. From there, we always look for a chance to have direct interaction. We connect through collaborative projects, organize group field trips, or simply sit down to talk with the people behind the work. Through these interactions, a clear theme emerges: People have a deep, genuine motivation to make the world a better place in their own unique way. However, despite doing great work, almost every project lacks a network and a supportive community to sustain it. Each initiative faces its own unique problems, and they are often navigating them alone.





STORIES FROM THE GROUND

- **CAM KIM AGRICULTURAL AND ECO-TOURISM COOPERATIVE**

The [Cam Kim Cooperative](#) stands as an exemplary model of the solidarity economy deeply integrated with the principles of localization. At its core, this initiative shifts away from extractive, globalized systems by focusing entirely on the inherent multiple forms of wealth and local resources of the local community. By leveraging what is already present within the region, the cooperative is trying to create sustainable livelihoods, restore ecological balance, and drive environmental regeneration. Crucially, it serves as a guardian of the region's cultural heritage, ensuring that invaluable local knowledge and traditional practices are actively preserved and utilized rather than lost to globalization.

One of the most innovative aspects of this initiative is how it transforms the entire village into a “school without lecture halls.” It functions as a living, breathing educational ecosystem where both youth and visitors can immerse themselves in the daily realities of traditional rural life. This approach effectively brings local knowledge and wisdom out of the margins and integrates it into active learning paradigms. By establishing an extensive, community-led educational tourism network, the cooperative covers a diverse range of topics—from ecological stewardship to traditional handicraft. This creates an open, dynamic, and highly effective place-based education space that bridges generational divides.

Economically, the cooperative is operated entirely by local residents with the explicit goal of rebuilding the rural economy, and nurturing the ecological foundation from the ground up. This localized control significantly enhances the community's overall autono-

my and long-term resilience against external economic shocks. To further this goal, the cooperative has established robust, hyper-local networks for small-scale manufacturing, traditional crafts, local-run homestay and artisan collaboration, ensuring that economic benefits circulate directly within the village. Finally, the governance of the Cam Kim Cooperative embodies the true spirit of community empowerment. Every initiative, policy, and educational program is developed and implemented through participatory decision-making processes. This ensures that the voices of the local people remain at the center of their own economic and cultural revitalization, making it a perfect example of a systemic shift toward a more resilient, localized future.

- **HUMAN ECOLOGY PRACTICAL AREA (HEPA): A MODEL OF REGENERATIVE ECOLOGY**

The [Human Ecology Practical Area \(HEPA\)](#) is a nature reserve located in Ha Tinh, North Central Vietnam. HEPA was established to regenerate a vast expanse of barren, rocky land devastated by years of unsustainable exploitation, simultaneously creating a comprehensive model for regenerative development.

Driven by the philosophy of “Serving Nature” (phụng sự thiên nhiên), HEPA's founders have persistently restored every inch of soil and every stream. They have cultivated a natural forest ecosystem spanning over 500 hectares where the community learns to live in harmony with the forest, utilizing solar, water, and wind energy for farming and daily life. Transforming from bare hills, HEPA now integrates biodiversity conservation with agroecological development, fiercely pro

Cam Kim Agricultural and
Ecotourism Cooperative



tecting the forest while creating sustainable, human-scale livelihoods.

HEPA's masterplan is based on Applied Ecology and Human Ecology theories, deeply rooted in the indigenous knowledge of ethnic minorities. The land is divided into three main zones: the sacred forest, the enrichment forest, and the agroecology-livelihood zone. Each area embodies the harmony between humans and nature. After 23 years, forest cover has surged from 39% to over 99%, now boasting massive indigenous trees and rich biodiversity.

The reserve operates on a co-management governance model, ensuring everyone monitors, benefits from, and shares responsibility for the land. This success stems from the deep collaboration of multiple stakeholders, including local authorities, the HEPA team, and the local community.

Through its profound positive impacts, HEPA has become a "green school" — a place where farmers re-learn to bow in reverence to Mother Earth and express gratitude for streams and raindrops. It has welcomed tens of thousands of agricultural officials, experts, farmers, and students from Laos, Cambodia, Myanmar, and beyond, all seeking to learn how to live in alignment with nature.

- **TƯ VIỆT SEASONAL RICE FARM: REVIVING HERITAGE SEEDS AND REGENERATIVE AGRICULTURE**

Kien Giang, Mekong Delta

Having witnessed the devastating ecological and social impacts of chemical-intensive, industrialized monoculture using hybrid seeds, local farmer Tư Việt established the [Tư Việt Seasonal Rice Farm](#) in Kien Giang. His initiative serves as a living sanctuary dedicated to preserving indigenous seasonal rice culture, restoring agricultural biodiversity, and educating future generations. In a monumental effort to protect global food sovereignty, the farm collaborated with Can Tho University to successfully rejuvenate 850 traditional sea-

sonal rice varieties retrieved directly from the Svalbard Global Seed Vault.

Operating entirely within ecological limits, the family farm currently cultivates over 40 heritage rice varieties—successfully restoring rare strains like Chim Rơi and Ba Bụi.

Uncle Tư Việt completely rejects chemical fertilizers and pesticides. Instead, he revitalizes the soil using nitrogen-rich Azolla (duckweed) for organic compost and employs natural pest control by integrating ducks and native birds into the paddies. By intercropping native plants like elephant grass and water celery, he has actively restored a vibrant, diverse wetland agroecosystem.

Beyond agricultural production, the farm acts as a vital hub for "Learning for Sustainable Living." Uncle Tư Việt has built a cultural exhibition space to preserve ancient farming tools and pioneered an immersive "farming schooling" model.

Each year, hundreds of students, researchers, and youth visit the farm to immerse themselves in nature,



HEPA

practice traditional harvesting techniques, and reconnect with the indigenous wisdom and daily realities of their ancestors.

To scale this localized, regenerative model, uncle Tư Việt founded the Innovative Farmers Cooperative (IFC) in 2023. He has successfully united nearly 30 local farming households to transition back to traditional seasonal rice cultivation. The cooperative not only provides shared agricultural training but also guarantees a stable local market for the community's harvest, ensuring secure, self-reliant livelihoods. By seamlessly blending seed sovereignty, place-based education, and cooperative solidarity economics, the Tư Việt Seasonal Rice Farm builds long-term community resilience while ensuring that traditional agricultural heritage is actively lived and passed on.

• THANH DONG ORGANIC FARM

The [Thanh Dong Organic Farm](#), is a community-owned initiative in Cam Thanh where eleven local farmers pooled their land to practice regenerative agroecology. Operating entirely based on regenerative principles, they utilize poly-

natural pest control, and homemade compost, completely eliminating chemical inputs. Functioning as a resilient local food hub, the cooperative shortens supply chains by providing organic produce directly to local residents, schools, and restaurants. Additionally, the garden serves as an active, place-based educational center, annually hosting students and other communities to share ecological knowledge and cooperative farming models.

• A SÔNG COLLECTIVE

The [Sông Collective](#) is a multidisciplinary collective of local artists, curators, and filmmakers nurturing Central Vietnam's cultural landscape. Acting as a hub for cultural regeneration, A Sông organizes grassroots exhibitions and community learning gatherings. They integrate art symbiotically with daily life, using local ecological, spiritual, and social realities as their creative foundation. By embedding art within the local context, A Sông confronts the impacts of rapid urbanization, climate change, and globalized development. Through community-engaged storytelling, the collective advocates for ecological protection, social resilience, and the preservation of indigenous identities against extractive modernization.



- **MOC CHAM COOPERATIVE: ECOSYSTEM STEWARDSHIP AND CULTURAL PRESERVATION**

Located on Cu Lao Cham island, the [Moc Cham Cooperative](#) was established to protect the local mountain ecosystems. The cooperative partners directly with residents to source natural materials, training the community in strict sustainable harvesting practices that prevent extractive over-exploitation. Operating as a hub for “Learning for Sustainable Living,” Moc Cham develops hands-on, place-based educational programs deeply rooted in indigenous ecology and daily life. Through these community-led initiatives, the cooperative actively rebuilds a resilient local economy while preserving vital traditional knowledge, most notably the island’s unique artisanal craft of hammock weaving.

- **TA LAI ECO LODGE: INDIGENOUS CULTURAL REGENERATION**

Founded to combat the marginalization of the Ma and X’Tieng ethnic minorities, [Ta Lai Eco Lodge](#) is a community-led initiative focused on cultural regeneration and local resilience. Recognizing the rapid loss of indigenous knowledge to globalized development, the project creates sustainable livelihoods rooted entirely in local resources.

The community actively revives traditional practices—including natural cotton cultivation, eco-printing, seasonal agriculture, and indigenous language classes. By empowering residents to reclaim their heritage, the lodge builds a powerful defense against extractive mass tourism, proving that sustainable development stems from honoring indigenous roots and fostering localized, human-scale economies.

- **HUONG LANG CO: YOUTH-LED CULTURAL PRESERVATION AND COMMUNITY DEFENSE**

[Huong Lang Co](#) is a youth-led initiative reviving the artisanal heritage of the Nam O Fish Sauce Craft Village. By collaborating closely with senior artisans, young people are reclaiming a profound sense of pride and belonging, actively preserving ancestral knowledge and traditional, human-scale food production.

The initiative serves as a living, place-based educational platform. Here, youth proudly share historical stories, demonstrate traditional production methods, and introduce community practices for preserving the local forest. Crucially, Huong Lang Co also acts as a vital voice of community resistance. They utilize their platform to educate visitors on the critical challenges facing the village, exposing how mass tourism, land privatization, and climate change directly threaten local ecosystems and livelihoods, while fiercely advocating for localized resilience.

- **LA.KAO TEA HOUSE: ANCIENT TEA CONSERVATION AND ARTISANAL LIVELIHOODS**

Founded in Hoi An, [La.Kao Tea House](#) is an initiative dedicated to preserving Vietnam’s ancient wild tea forests and traditional tea culture. By building direct, trust-based relationships with local artisans and indigenous communities, La.Kao ensures sustainable, human-scale livelihoods. The initiative strictly prioritizes ecological limits by advocating for seasonal harvesting techniques that protect the biodiversity of ancient tea ecosystems and actively conserve heritage trees. Rejecting mass-produced commercial agriculture, La.Kao champions small-scale, artisanal processing that honors indigenous knowledge. Operating as a mindful community space, it reconnects consumers with nature and traditional Vietnamese heritage, fostering deep community relationships, cultural preservation, and localized economic resilience.

- **THIEN SINH FARM: REGENERATIVE CIRCULAR AGRICULTURE**

Located in Da Lat, [Thien Sinh Farm](#) is a regenerative initiative resisting chemical-intensive, industrialized farming. Operating a closed-loop system, the farm prioritizes soil health and biodiversity. It eliminates chemical inputs by transforming agricultural waste—including whey from partner restaurants—into organic compost and biological livestock bedding. Functioning as a resilient local food hub, Thien Sinh connects directly with consumers via zero-waste delivery models. Furthermore, it serves as a place-based educational center, hosting community tours and volunteer programs to foster food literacy and rebuild trust between local growers and eaters through absolute transparency.

Ta Lai Eco Lodge

- **CỎ (GRASS): A LOCALIZED FOOD INITIATIVE**

Born from a desire to heal the impacts of agrochemicals, [Cỏ](#) is a Saigon-based space championing a localized, chemical-free food system. It supports small farmers by offering seasonal, biodiverse vegetable baskets, encouraging consumers to adapt to nature's rhythms.

Operating with a strict zero-waste philosophy, Cỏ functions as a community refill station and creatively repurposes unsold produce. Deeply rooted in the Gift Economy, it experiments with unstaffed, trust-based purchasing and pay-what-you-wish pricing. Through seasonal markets and a focus on food literacy, Cỏ builds a resilient, human-scale ecosystem grounded in mutual care and absolute transparency.

- Cỏ (Grass) is testament to how localization can sprout even from the biggest city.



- **ZÓ PROJECT: PRESERVING INDIGENOUS PAPERMAKING HERITAGE**

Born in Hanoi, the birthplace of the 800-year-old Dó papermaking craft, [Zó Project](#) is a social enterprise dedicated to saving this heritage from extinction in the face of industrial-scale operations. Zó revitalizes traditional craft villages by generating sustainable livelihoods and refining ancestral techniques for modern needs. To ensure ecological balance, Zó collaborates with local communities, ecologists and local authorities for responsible forest management. By partnering with master artisans and four ethnic minority communities, the initiative sustainably sources raw materials while regenerating vital indigenous knowledge. Furthermore, Zó actively fosters intergenerational learning, creating immersive educational spaces centered on local history, cultural heritage, and indigenous wisdom. It also connects rural populations with city people, maintaining a bridge between a deepening rural/urban divide.

POLICY AND THE LOCAL ECONOMY

While many of the initiatives featured in this chapter have emerged from communities themselves, they do not operate in isolation. In recent years, a number of national policies have helped create a more supportive environment for local production, cooperative enterprise, and rural development. Although not explicitly framed as localization policies, they play a role in strengthening local economies and community resilience.

- **OCOP (ONE COMMUNE, ONE PRODUCT)**

The OCOP program is a transformative national initiative launched by the Vietnamese government to revitalize rural economies by leveraging internal resources and distinct local advantages. Backed by a substantial state investment of 45,000 billion VND, OCOP strategically encourages cooperatives, collective economic models, and small-to-medium enterprises. The government acts as a structural facilitator—establishing legal frameworks, zoning production areas, and enforcing quality standards. It empowers local producers by providing comprehensive support, including technical training, technology adoption, branding, trade promotion, and financial access.

While this is not a perfect policy from a localization perspective, because it is still based on the growth-based and export-led economy, it does incentivize local people to value and preserve what they have. It makes a stand for the rural economy as a viable alternative to ever-accelerating urbanization.

By decentralizing economic power and prioritizing



community-led production, it preserves local heritage, builds domestic self-reliance, and strengthens Vietnam's economic immunity against global market fluctuations.

The Law on Cooperatives (Updated 2023) Complementing OCOP, Vietnam continuously modernizes its legal frameworks to actively foster a solidarity economy. The 2023 update to the Law on Cooperatives provides robust institutional support designed to encourage people to adopt this model. Under this legislation, cooperatives are granted the highest tier of tax and fee incentives available within their respective industries and geographic regions. To ensure these collective enterprises thrive, the state mandates priority access to diverse financial funds and capital sources. Furthermore, the government directly subsidizes their growth by offering specialized consulting, operational training from inception to expansion, and tangible support for essential infrastructure and equipment. Together, these policies institutionalize grassroots economic empowerment and prioritize localized, sustainable development over extractive globalization.



Tử Việt Seasonal Rice Farm



FUTURE DIRECTIONS

During this mapping process, Vcil Community has realized that many individuals and initiatives are doing highly valuable and meaningful work, actively bringing localization to life in their own unique ways. However, they are often completely unaware of one another's existence. These grassroots efforts typically operate independently, lacking coordination, connection, and platforms for mutual learning and exchange.

Therefore, Vcil Community has stepped in to act as a catalyst and network builder within this ecosystem. We actively introduce and connect these previously isolated groups. We have seen firsthand that people are incredibly enthusiastic when they discover other individuals, projects, and initiatives that share their core values and approaches.

We recognize that building these relationships is essential; these networks are the crucial actors needed to drive a systemic paradigm shift and to propel the localization movement forward, both in Vietnam and globally. Through our social initiatives, Vcil Community has already established collaborative frameworks that bring people together, most notably facilitating these deep connections through immersive learning journeys and field trips.





California Condor

CALIFORNIA

Ripe For Change

By students and staff

at University of California Santa Cruz's Right Livelihood Center





OUR ORIGIN STORY

Helena Norberg-Hodge, the founder of Local Futures and a pioneer of the worldwide localization movement, is a [Right Livelihood Award Laureate](#). UC Santa Cruz is home to the Right Livelihood Center, which is dedicated to advancing the work and solutions of the Laureates and the urgently needed responses they offer to the world's deepest problems.

I'm Dave Shaw, a passionate localist, educator, farmer, and musician. I founded the [Right Livelihood Center at UC Santa Cruz](#) and [Santa Cruz Permaculture](#) to support communities, locally and globally, in transforming their shared future through dialogue and collective action. Together with dozens of colleagues at UCSC we have been following Helena's work for decades, hosting her in 2019 for our annual Laureate Lecture and as a frequent online guest speaker in classes. In 2025, I traveled to the [Planet Local Summit in Ladakh](#), where I was inspired to work more closely with Local Futures and formed deep and lasting friendships with the co-authors of this magazine. I came home and recruited a small but mighty team of undergraduate researchers and emerging localization activists, Anna Truong and Ruby Wenzlaff, to take on this project together. We hope to host a Planet Local Summit in California in 2027, bringing together California's many networks and organizations working on localization.

What keeps us motivated to work on this project is that the longer we look, the more we see that the things people most need – healthy food, real community, a living relationship with the land – are exactly the things the global economy tends to erode and that localization tends to restore. This mapping is our attempt to find the people already doing that restorative work across California, and to help them find one another.

LOCALIZATION IN CALIFORNIA

California is ripe with contradictions. It is the fourth-largest economy on the planet – a place that, were it a nation, would sit just behind the United States, China, and Germany. It's home to Silicon Valley and the handful of technology companies that increasingly mediate human attention and influence democracies; of Hollywood and a media and entertainment industry that exports the dominant culture's stories to every corner of the world; of an industrial agriculture that turns the Central Valley into one vast field whose produce is shipped across oceans; and of the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach, the largest container complex in the hemisphere, through which the goods of the global economy flow day and night. If economic globalization has a control room, a good deal of it is here.

And yet California



has been a great seedbed of alternatives. The modern agroecological, permaculture, organic, farm-to-table, and food-sovereignty movements all have deep California roots. From the redwood coast to the desert valleys, there is an extraordinary density of people quietly building something else: Indigenous land stewardship, alternative economy networks, community land trusts and worker cooperatives, seed libraries and tool libraries, Community Supported Agriculture and farmworker-to-farmer training programs, and neighborhood food systems. The place that runs much of the machinery of the global economy also incubates some of its most hopeful alternatives.

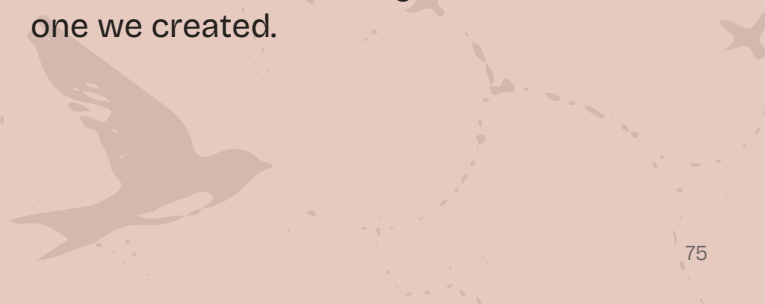
This tension is the defining feature of the California story, and it

is why localization matters so much here. The many crises we tend to treat as separate – the gutting of rural communities, the poisoning of land and water, the loss of small farms, hunger amid plenty – share a common root in an economy organized around global trade rather than local need, and share a common remedy in localization. If another way can take root in the belly of the growth economy, it can take root anywhere.

OUR MAPPING JOURNEY DIRECTIONS

Before reaching out to anyone, the three of us spent time getting on the same page, studying databases and maps that other groups had already made, and talking with mappers who had walked this road before us – among them Thais Mantovani in Brazil, who shared frankly what had worked and what hadn't.

From there we opened two submission forms: (1) so that groups across California could tell us, in their own words, what they were doing and (2) so we could identify a small network of "multipliers," to spread the word and draw more initiatives into the fold. We did not get a strong response to either of these yet, but luckily we had huge lists of projects to suggest, and we also identified several adjacent networks doing similar work, some of whom had databases similar yet different to the one we created.



A GROWING NETWORK OF NETWORKS DIRECTIONS

Throughout our process we sat down with several people from established networks already thinking at the level of systemic change: leaders from the [California hub of the Wellbeing Economy Alliance](#), organizers from the [California Donut Economy Coalition](#), [Degrowth California](#) and [Regenerative California](#), and [Matt Biggar](#), author of *Connected to Place*. These conversations became the bridge between the wider movements and the grounded, place-based initiatives we most

wanted to find. Each person we met pointed us toward others, and the map grew through relationships and conversations more than our submissions form or internet research. One theme surfaced again and again: groups doing remarkably similar work, often only a city or county apart, were either only loosely connected or not at all. We believe that what we might call a localization movement in California is already present, but largely not self-identified as such, nor richly interconnected. That, in the end, is what the mapping process is for: not to rank, brand, or produce a static document but to weave a stronger network of people to get things done. It's about relationships. The most encouraging discovery of the whole process was simply how much is already here, and the desire to collaborate.

STORIES FROM THE GROUND

- **AMAH MUTSUN LAND TRUST**

Founded in 2015, San Juan Bautista, CA

Of all the initiatives we encountered, the [Amah Mutsun Land Trust](#) reaches furthest back, and furthest forward. Initiated by the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band, AMLT represents the Indigenous peoples of California's Central Coast, across San Benito, Santa Clara, Monterey, and Santa Cruz counties. The Trust is dedicated to conserving and restoring both the cultural and the natural resources within the traditional territories of the Mutsun and Awaswas-speaking peoples, stewarding lands and waters to ensure a resilient future for Popeloutchom, their ancestral lands, and to fulfill their obligations to Creator.

At the heart of their work is the Native Stewardship Corps, a two-year program that brings young tribal members back to their homelands to relearn cultural practices, train in research, and do hands-on stewardship, making sure that traditional ecological knowledge does not disappear.

AMLT also builds partnerships that return Indigenous stewardship to the landscape at scale. A memorandum of understanding with Pinnacles National Park supports cultural-resource stewardship and the restoration of basket-weaving and edible grass-

land plants. A partnership with the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District protects more than 150

culturally significant native plant species across 60,000 acres, including Mt. Umunhum, the site of the Amah Mutsun creation story. With UC Berkeley, the Trust is transcribing 78,000 pages of 1920s field notes containing Mutsun language and ethnobotany. Most recently, the Native Stewardship Corps responded to the Moss Landing battery fire, tracking heavy-metal deposition in the local food chain. Localization here means something older than the very concept of 'economics': the right relationship of a people to their place.

- **SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIES LAW CENTER**

Founded in 2009, Oakland, CA

Most of the initiatives in this chapter grow food, energy, or community directly; the [Sustainable Economies Law Center](#) builds the legal scaffolding that lets the others stand. Founded in Oakland in 2009, SELC provides legal services, research, education, and advocacy to help communities create their own sources of food, water, housing, energy, and livelihoods — the often invisible architecture that helps local economies legally form and hold together.



It hosts a Resilient Communities Legal Café – a sliding-scale, donation-based clinic where people are paired with a lawyer to work through the practical questions of starting a worker-owned cooperative, converting an existing business to worker ownership, organizing a housing cooperative, or founding a nonprofit. In 2023 alone, the Café reached more than 475 cooperatives, mutual-aid groups, nonprofits, and land trusts. Alongside it, SELC works on land return and stewardship, housing justice, food and energy sovereignty, immigrant-owned co-ops, and the democratization of money and finance. SELC hosts the Radical Real Estate Law School, which trains community leaders to become lawyers without attending law school at all using California’s apprenticeship route to the bar while building a body of legal tools aimed at decommodifying land and housing. The premise is that the law itself, by treating land and shelter as commodities, is part of the problem, and that different kinds of lawyers can help write different sets of rules.

SELC is also involved in writing public policy, including Oakland’s and Berkeley’s pioneering worker-cooperative ordinances – a direct line from a grassroots legal clinic to municipal law. See our section Localization in Policy for more information.

Localization is not only about what we grow and make, but about whose knowledge counts, who owns what, who governs what and how, and whether the legal system is built to serve a community or to extract from it.

- **FIBERSHED**

Founded 2010, Point Reyes Station, CA

Fibershed pioneered the concept of a regional “fibershed” – a geographic landscape capable of clothing itself, much as a watershed holds its water or a foodshed its food. The organization grew out of a single experiment: in 2010, weaver and natural dyer Rebecca Burgess committed to wearing, for

one year, only garments whose fiber, dye, and labor came from within 150 miles of her home. Crowdfunded and stitched together with a team of local makers, the “150-mile wardrobe” was really a needs assessment in disguise, tracing the textile supply chain from soil to skin and asking who, within a single region, still grows fiber, mills it, dyes it, and sews it.

The answer turned out to be: more people than anyone expected. The project became a movement and, in 2013, a nonprofit. The Northern California Fibershed now organizes a membership of nearly 150 farmers, ranchers, shearers, spinners, weavers, knitters, designers, and manufacturers across some nineteen counties.

At the heart of the work is what Fibershed calls a “soil-to-soil” system: clothing grown through regenerative agriculture and returned, at the end of its life, to the earth. Its Climate Beneficial program gives farmers and ranchers



direct technical and financial support to adopt carbon-farming practices that pull carbon from the atmosphere into living soil, then connects that fiber to designers and brands willing to pay its true cost. Through a Wool & Fine Fiber Symposium, a Learning Center, regional manufacturing initiatives, and a Community Supported Cloth program, it rebuilds skills and infrastructure long ago shipped overseas.

- **LOCALWIKI**

Founded 2004, San Francisco, CA

LocalWiki is a grassroots effort to collect, share, and open up local knowledge. It began as an experiment by two UC Davis graduates to see if a whole town could write its own encyclopedia. Anyone could add or edit an article — about the local government, the history of a neighborhood, a beloved oak tree, a school, a social service, a local char-

acter. LocalWiki rests on a simple conviction: that the knowledge of a place belongs to, and is best written by, the people who live there. Against an internet that funnels attention toward a handful of global platforms, it builds an open commons of local memory - the kind of shared, non-commercial knowledge a community needs to understand and govern itself. If localization is partly about a place coming to know itself, LocalWiki is its infrastructure.

- **ALIANZA COACHELLA VALLEY**

Founded 2010, Coachella, CA

Localization is also about power and who gets to make the decisions. In the Eastern Coachella Valley, a largely agricultural region long shaped by distant business interests, Alianza Coachella Valley works to return that power to residents themselves. Through a “roundtable” approach, it brings community members together with government, business, philanthropy, and fellow nonprofits to act on the priorities the community itself names. For example, it helps get community representation on the water district board, so residents who farm the fields that feed the nation, yet often drink tainted water, gain a seat where decisions about their water are made.

- **AGRICULTURE & LAND-BASED TRAINING ASSOCIATION**

Founded 2001, Salinas, CA

ALBA is a Salinas Valley nonprofit that trains mostly immigrant and limited-resource farmworkers to become independent organic farmers. On a 110-acre farm between Salinas and Chualar, ALBA provides bilingual education in organic farm production, business planning, and marketing, then gives graduates subsidized access to land and equipment for up to five years to launch their own farm businesses.

ALBA also contributes to several community initiatives to give the community better access to food and on-farm education, such as Market Match, which subsidizes the cost of fresh produce for families eligible for food



assistance, and the Food, Land, Water Project – an annual field trip to the ALBA farm for elementary school children to learn and interact with organic farming and farmers.

- **FEED COOPERATIVE**

Founded 2011, Petaluma, CA

Farmers Exchange of Earthly Delights (FEED) is a farmer- and employee-owned food hub dedicated to building farm-centered, sustainable food systems. It became California's first farmer- and employee-owned produce cooperative, connecting some 80 local farms with businesses and households across the Bay Area. The FEED Bin, a multi-farm produce box, delivers harvest-to-order produce to North Bay pickup hubs. By prioritizing small, local farms – many of them only a few acres – FEED strengthens community ties and builds a more resilient regional food economy.

- **HOMELESS GARDEN PROJECT**

Founded 1990, Santa Cruz, CA

Homeless Garden Project is a non-profit providing transitional employment, job training, and support services to people experiencing homelessness through a 3.5-acre certified

organic farm. The Project operates a Community Supported Agriculture initiative, farm stand, and retail stores. They have served the Santa Cruz community since 1990, combining food production, workforce development, and community healing in a single model.

LOCALIZATION IN POLICY

- **CALIFORNIA PUBLIC BANKING ACT (AB 857) 2019 • STATEWIDE**

The first state law in the U.S. to let cities and counties charter their own public banks. It allows local governments to keep public deposits working for community needs – housing, small farms, local business – rather than generating profits for distant shareholders. Urban Agriculture Incentive Zones Act (AB 551) 2013 • Statewide

Enables cities and counties to offer reduced property-tax assessments to landowners who place vacant urban lots under contract for small-scale farming. A state law whose entire purpose is to make local food production pencil out.

- **CALIFORNIA FARM TO SCHOOL PROGRAM 2020 • STATEWIDE**

The country's largest state investment in local-food procurement, channeling more than \$52 million in 2024 to connect school cafeterias with nearby regenerative farms. Participating growers now make roughly a quarter of their sales to schools.



- **COMMUNITY CHOICE ENERGY AUTHORIZED 2002 • COUNTY AND REGIONAL**

Born out of the 2001 energy crisis, this model lets local agencies take electricity procurement back from the big utilities. County-scale agencies from Marin to the Central Coast now buy power for millions of Californians and reinvest in local renewables.

- **GOOD FOOD PURCHASING PROGRAM 2012 • CITY OF LOS ANGELES**

Redirects the enormous buying power of the city's school district toward food that is local, sustainable, and fair to workers. The model has since spread to cities across the country.

- **WORKER COOPERATIVE POLICIES 2015-2016 • CITIES OF OAKLAND AND BERKELEY**

Among the first municipal policies in the nation to actively nurture worker-owned cooperatives, keeping ownership and wealth in the community. Both were drafted with the Sustainable Economies Law Center.



Sustainable Economies Law Center

Daily Acts





THE TASK AHEAD

It's clear to us that the groundwork is already laid for a more tangible, visible, and systemic localization movement in California. The initiatives in this chapter, and many hundreds more across California, are active and not only eager to find one another but to work together. Our task ahead is less to build something new than to keep strengthening the connections between what already exists.

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2027: A PLANET LOCAL SUMMIT?

We always envisioned this mapping project as the first step of a longer journey rather than a finished product. The idea of a Planet Local Summit in Santa Cruz in 2027 is brewing. There is as a sign of real appetite for a “big tent” gathering that brings together diverse communities working in all areas of localization. Such a summit would shine a spotlight on what's already happening, engage in “big picture activism” that confronts globalization while building local power, and help California's localization movement see its own scale and strength — scaling up, to shape policy and institutions, and scaling out, to spread from community to community.





Black-necked Crane

LADAKH

Seeding a Future Rooted in Tradition

By Stanzin Dothon, Kunzang Deachen, Padma Rigzin, Skarma Nangzes

Local Futures Ladakh





CULTURE, SEEDS, AND RESILIENCE

For many years, Local Futures Ladakh has been involved in grassroots localization initiatives, from agriculture to the economy to heritage and the connections between them. The Local Futures Ladakh team got involved in this localization mapping project with a vision to extend our new initiative of preserving local seeds and various aspects around it in Ladakh. This mapping project has given us the opportunity to connect to more people and groups who are still very resilient and connected to land and community in the midst of the changing face of Ladakh.

What motivates us to localize or to get involved in this movement is the reality of what we have seen from mainstream development, which is trying to change the way we lived and shared this land for centuries. Why are we still walking down a path that will create more chaos, disconnection and problems?

Engaging in the localization movement and thinking critically about the kind of development or progress happening are among the few ways to protect against being brainwashed by consumer-

ism. It offers paths into the future rooted in this place and in human-scale social connections. Through this process, we've reflected on what kinds of change will build community and strengthen our connection to ourselves, each other, and the rest of nature, of which we are a part.

LOCALIZATION IN LADAKH

For centuries, Ladakh was a self-sufficient region, and people lived in harmony as much as possible. Of course, this is not to romanticize that everything was perfect, since our ancestors had their own share of difficulties. Yet, these problems were visible and could often be dealt with to an extent within communities themselves, unlike many modern problems. Inflation, for example, is beyond many people's understanding, let alone our control.

A key challenge we see in Ladakh is a lack of awareness of the bigger picture. In the past few years, we have increasing-ly seen peo-



ple talking about the ill effects of junk food, fast development without considering local knowledge and requirements, a mental and physical health crisis, degradation of natural resources like water, poorer quality vegetables and food grains, and so on. Yet, there are not enough major efforts to connect the dots in a larger picture. And even if some people do connect the dots, they do not feel empowered to do something about it.

Yet we do see and hope for greater awareness and a slowing of the impact of big changes in places like Ladakh. The antidote of ignorance is awareness. For us, this mapping project has precisely been about building awareness within our own society and helping weave together the many vibrant initiatives and livelihoods that are creating a more resilient local future in our part of the Trans-Himalaya, today.



STORIES FROM THE GROUND

- **RIGZIN ANGDU - REVIVING LAND, COMMUNITY, AND TRADITION**

Rigzin Angdu, 50-plus years old from Likir, Ladakh, carries forward a lifelong connection with the land — one that began in childhood and has grown into a shared commitment with his wife and community. Rooted in family heritage, his work focuses on agroecology and genuinely regenerative farming practices that prioritize local and regional consumption, rather than commercialized versions of “regenerative” agriculture.

At the heart of Rigzin’s approach is the traditional process known as “Lhangdey”—a holistic cycle that begins with soil preparation and continues through to harvest. This process is deeply communal, involving family members, neighbors, and animals, each playing a role in agricultural activities such as sowing, weeding, seed conservation, and exchange. Beyond food production, Lhangdey embodies relationships between people, land, and animals, strengthening community bonds through shared labor and knowledge.

However, Rigzin observes a growing shift

from animal-based farming to mechanization, particularly the replacement of dzo (a hybrid of yak and cow) with tractors. While machines offer convenience, he highlights their long-term ecological and social costs. Traditional animal-powered methods ensure deeper soil preparation, better water absorption, and more efficient land use. In contrast, mechanized farming often leaves soil shallowly tilled, potentially leading to drier land over time. Additionally, reduced reliance on human and animal labor weakens community interdependence, as fewer people are needed in the fields.

Rigzin’s livelihood remains rooted in both land and livestock, supported by 13 cows and dzos, along with income from by-products of farm produce. Despite challenges, he remains committed to this path because it aligns with his vision of food sovereignty and sustainable living.

Through his work, Rigzin sends a powerful message to younger generations: while working with land and animals may be demanding, it offers dignity, resilience, and independence. In a time of rising unemployment, he encourages youth to reconnect with the land, emphasizing that meaningful livelihoods are possible for those willing to engage deeply and “get their hands dirty.”



- **PEOPLE'S ACTION GROUP FOR INCLUSION AND RIGHTS (PAGIR)**

PAGIR is a city-based grassroots organization that provides an enabling space for differently-abled individuals through livelihood generation and advocacy. It was established in 2007 by founding members Ms. Vidhya Kalyani, Ms. Madhura Padhay, Ms. Kunzang Dolma, and Mr. Mohd Iqbal. It has since grown into a collective with 13 board members and a wider network of contributors.

President Tsering Gurmet spoke about how the organization was created in response to the lack of social acceptance and inclusion of people with disabilities. Its core aim is to help such individuals access government facilities and to guide families and the wider community toward a more inclusive mindset — ensuring that people with disabilities are meaningfully included in mainstream society.

There is a common misconception that PAGIR functions as a residential space where differently-abled individuals are provided with food and accommodation. In reality, its work extends far beyond that. PAGIR focuses on advocacy, awareness, and the creation of opportunities for inclusion across different aspects of life.

In addition to its social initiatives, the organization is engaged in environmental efforts, including upcycling and recycling paper and clothing. It promotes inclusivity not only in education but also in infrastructure and broader community systems, aiming to put into practice the principles of inclusion that are often discussed only in theory.

- **RESTORATION OF THE COMMONS**

Zing Spang is a shared common land traditionally used for grazing animals and collecting fodder. Over the years, there have been repeated

attempts at encroachment; however, local villagers have consistently come together to protect and preserve this commons.

The land is considered sacred by the community, as it is believed to be blessed by local deities and revered spiritual figures, including previous sTsas Rinpocheys (an honorific term used to address Tibetan Buddhist respected spiritual teachers), who emphasized the importance of protecting and preserving the area. Every year, during the 5th month of the Tibetan calendar, the celebration of SadaK Dondol (a prayer ceremony for spirits of water and land) is observed, with lamas from Sankar Monastery and Matho Monastery conducting prayers and rituals in the area.

At times, grass from the commons is cut and taken to private lands for decoration, often without awareness of its ecological and cultural significance. Whenever such incidents are noticed, residents actively intervene to safeguard the land. Beyond its practical use, Zing Spang serves as an important natural and cultural heritage space for the community. During the summer months, its greenery offers residents beauty, relaxation, and a strong connection to nature.

The community especially encourages youth to take responsibility for protecting and sustaining such shared natural heritage spaces for future generations.

- **LADAKH LOCAL ORGANIC FOOD RESTAURANT**

Padma Lhamo established the Ladakh Organic Food Restaurant in 2007 with the vision of providing healthy, organic, and locally rooted food to the people of Ladakh. Driven by her passion for cooking, she turned her interest into an ethical food initiative focused on serving preservative-free, minimally processed meals.

The restaurant sources natural ingredients from the mountains of Nubra and nearby re-



gions, while also supporting local vendors and producers. Owing to the food's freshness and lack of preservatives, doctors often recommend the restaurant to patients as a safe and healthy dining option during recovery. Over time, it has built a loyal customer base among locals and visitors alike.

- **SONAM ANGMO - YOUNG ORGANIC FARMER AND MUSHROOM GROWER**

As an agriculture student, Sonam Angmo closely observed Ladakh's rapid shift from an agrarian society to a tourism-driven economy. With increasing youth migration and reliance on tourism and government jobs, many once-fertile agricultural lands that cultivated buckwheat, barley, and traditional crops were being abandoned. Disturbed by this social and cultural transition, she aspired to contribute through local action and inspire others.

Sonam grows fresh oyster mushrooms as part of the integrated family farm, where traditional crops like barley, buckwheat, mustard, and lentils are grown alongside dairy, fodder, and fruit crops.

A conversation with her brother over a mushroom dish sparked the idea. Noticing Ladakh's high demand for mushrooms—mostly supplied from outside the region—she began exploring the potential of local mushroom cultivation. Drawing on her agricultural background, she recognized a significant opportunity to address the demand-supply gap through a sustainable local production and consumption model.

- **DEACHEN ANGMO - REVIVING LAND, COMMUNITY AND TRADITION**

Deachen Angmo is a farmer from Thikay/Stakmo village. She lives in Thiksay during the Winter and Stakmo in the summer for the cultivation of the Naas (barley) and nunskar

(mustard). Her vision and mission are to give farming the recognition and value it deserves at a time when mainstream education and development tend to neglect this fundamental vocation and valorize desk jobs and urban careers. She tries to get all the family members, including her children, involved in farming, doing real, practical work in the field, including helping to collect or pluck vegetables. They also help with another basic but important practical skill for daily living: tailoring.

Deachen is the decision-maker for her work, as she spends the most time in the field, and has accordingly acquired a nuanced attunement to the ecological particularities of her place.

- **RIGZIN SMANLA - TRADITIONAL MEDICINE, SMANLA "BAY-DUR"**

Smanla "Bay-dur" is a Tibetan medicine or Sowa-Rigpa practitioner in Likir village. The practitioner of this medical tradition is known as an Amchi. It has been 25 years that Rigzin Smanla has been practicing this knowledge system, which is passed from generation to generation. He learned from his grandfather, who also received the blessings of Bakula Rinpoche (the abbot of Spituk Monastery and founding figure of contemporary Ladakh). The Rinpoche prodded Smanla's grandfather to continue the practice. Smanla's practice is a testament to a promise made to the Rinpoche.

Smanla said, "So I got involved in it and eventually started practising. It has been passed on to my kids, too. I hope they will practice." Smanla's practice relies on various herbs found in the mountains that are used to make medicine. This kind of practice is an important source of accessible healthcare in Ladakh, because, at its core, the healing it offers is not based on a business model, but on dona-

tions and offerings according to the patient's capacity to pay or barter.

- **JULAY LADAKH**

Julay Ladakh is an organization that promotes study tours and Ladakhi food and handicrafts through public events, conferences, festivals, etc. An Eco-cultural tourism development project for rural villages of Ladakh is also underway to strengthen sustainable local economies for rural communities. Julay Ladakh has also been working to promote cultivation of traditional, healthy – but currently neglected – buckwheat crop in Ladakh, encouraging buckwheat dishes in menus at homes and in restaurants. Their overarching aim is to help local communities – as well as foreign tour groups – cherish traditional cultures that co-exist with nature.

- **SHERIG FOUNDATION**

Shesrig Foundation is a women-led art conservation practice based in Ladakh, actively engaged in preserving cultural heritage through the on-site restoration

of Ladakhi wall paintings and, more recently, expanding its efforts to Mustang, Nepal and Sikkim.

In addition to restoring artefacts such as Thangka paintings, polychrome wood, and old manuscripts, Shesrig Foundation opens its doors to the public, offering firsthand views of conservation processes at the studio and on site. This initiative not only educates visitors on preservation techniques but also fosters community involvement by inviting local students and villagers to observe the restoration process, thus raising awareness about cultural heritage.

- **CHA GROUP STAKNA - WOMEN-LED COMMUNITY FARMING**

The Cha Group, formed in 2025 in Stakna, Ladakh, is a collective of ten women who have come together to create a sustainable, community-driven livelihood. Rooted in cooperation and shared responsibility, the group

focuses on local food production, community gardens, and seed-saving initiatives to strengthen food sovereignty and financial independence.

Cha Group envisions expanding its activities beyond agriculture. Plans include starting stitching work to produce and sell local clothing, as well as making traditional items like tarchok (prayer flags). These efforts aim to diversify income sources while preserving cultural practices.



Beyond economic benefits, the initiative represents a shift in social dynamics. It provides women with greater independence and confidence, helping them move beyond traditional constraints and participate more actively in decision-making and community life. United by shared goals and mutual support, the Cha Group demonstrates how collective effort, local knowledge, and access to land can create meaningful and sustainable livelihoods. With a vision for growth over the next decade, they hope to see more community gardens flourish and significantly increase their income while continuing to work together as a strong and cohesive group.

- **LIKtSEY VILLAGE ORGANIC FARMING AND COMMUNITY-BASED SCHOOL**

For the past 4–5 years, the village of Liktse has been collectively practicing organic farming. During this time, there has been a noticeable improvement in crop quality compared to earlier methods. The land in Liktse is naturally fertile, but it requires more water to sustain cultivation.

During the COVID period, the community had the opportunity to think about education. A group of parents, particularly those of 11 students, expressed serious worry. Many families couldn't af-

ford to send their children to city schools. In response, the village community gathered together and formed a village committee to oversee the operation of both the school and hostel. The hostel was initially supported by contributions from local families, including ration supplies. Over time, the school was designated as a Model High School, and enrollment began to increase again. Today, approximately 55 pupils are enrolled, including children from adjacent regions such as Tukla, Phulak, Tiri, Tarchit, Hanle, and Nubra, as well as transfers from private schools.

The school takes a balanced approach to academics and community life. Students are able to go home, and assist with domestic and agricultural chores, thus helping to maintain connection to both the culture and rural agrarian economy. Teachers also ensure that less homework is assigned during these times. On other Sundays, students engage in tasks such as gardening and cleaning, which promote responsibility and life skills.

- **EARTH BUILDING**

Earth Building is an endeavour to reclaim ancestral house-building knowledge and reintroduce natural building, at a time when destructive materials like concrete are nearly extinguishing local, natural materials across Ladakh, India and beyond. Their main goal is to keep designs eco-friendly, aesthetically pleasing, functional, and thermally comfortable.

It was started by Stanzin Phuntsog from



Ladakh and Samyuktha from South India – two people who love working with mud and enjoy thinking out of the box to make things happen. Literally from two ends of India, their love for mud brought them to work together. Their explorations have been in many earthen techniques, including cob, earthbag, adobe, stone masonry, rammed earth, cob ovens, and rocket stoves. They have built arches and vaults in brick, cob, and earthbag, as well as an earthbag dome. In plaster, they have worked with clay, lime, and various other traditional materials and techniques. In roofing, they have worked on thatch roofs, madras terrace roofs, tiled roofs, reciprocal roofs, and Ladakhi traditional roofs.

With the motto of “making crazy designs that are functional too,” Samyuktha and Stanzin Phuntsog take inspiration from traditional homes and love travelling and exploring traditional techniques in natural building.

• VILLAGE LAB FOUNDATION

Village Lab Foundation (VLF) is a grassroots organization based in the Nubra Valley, Ladakh. By using the village as a dynamic learning lab and empowering both elders and youth as facilitators, VLF designs and delivers place-based learning experiences deeply rooted in Ladakhi culture, heritage, and Indigenous wisdom. Founded by Rigzen Wangmo and Sonam Dorje, VLF is dedicated to transforming education in Ladakh's villages through innovative, intergenerational learning models.

They fulfil their vision through the ‘Young Readers’ program and ‘The Ladakhi Way’, an after-school program that brings together experiential learning with local knowledge, using the village as a learning lab and local elders and youth as facilitators. These efforts ensure culturally relevant material reaches

children, and encourages communication skills, critical thinking, and a closer connection to Ladakh's heritage.

VLF nurtures purposeful problem-solvers who embrace their roots, preserve their heritage, and carry it forward with pride, confidence, and a strong sense of responsibility – both for their local community and for the world.

• WOMEN'S ALLIANCE OF LADAKH

The Women's Alliance of Ladakh (WAL) was co-founded by Helena Norberg-Hodge and Dolma Tsering in 1991, with the twin goals of raising the status of rural women and strengthening local culture and agriculture.

WAL has been organising a two-day local food festival for three decades.

The trans-Himalayan environment has fostered a unique food culture based on wheat and barley, and the festival showcases this. People get to relish a variety of Ladakhi food, like sku (similar to pasta), thukpa (a soup-rich noodle dish), paba (made with barley), and khambir (local sourdough bread).

In 2026, during a vibrant celebration of Ladakhi culture, the Women's Alliance of Leh launched THOMS: An Evening Bazaar at a small campus in Leh. This initiative aimed at bringing the community together while promoting local artisans, culture, and traditions. The bazaar featured a wide array of local stalls, showcasing Ladakhi crafts, cuisine, handmade products, and more.



SEEDS FOR THE FUTURE

We conducted this mapping project to give visibility to the many initiatives already building healthy, fair local communities and economies within ecological limits across Ladakh. Notably, this is not an exhaustive list. What we aimed to do was to help initiatives discover one another and encourage networking and collaboration. Furthermore, we intended to raise awareness about localization and the need for a global-to-local shift as a strategy for systemic change, and to aid in building or strengthening a localization movement. Overall, the vision was to create an overview of inspiring examples that demonstrate the diversity of efforts to build more locally based, resilient futures. This mapping has also helped us expand our network, so we will be collaborating with these people and groups in the future.

WHAT LOCALIZATION LOOKS LIKE IN PRACTICE

- **DIFFERENT PLACES, DIFFERENT PATHS**

Though there are many commonalities across regions and countries, localization does not look the same everywhere. In Ladakh it is expressed through local seeds, traditional farming, and cultural continuity. In Vietnam it often focuses on preserving local wisdom and strengthening community economies amid rapid globalization. In Germany it appears through a focus on community sufficiency, mutual support, and rebuilding local relationships. In California it frequently takes the form of food sovereignty, Indigenous stewardship, cooperative ownership, community land trusts, and policy innovation. In Brazil it is closely linked to agroecology, solidarity economies, Indigenous territories, and biocultural diversity.

These differences matter. Localization is not a blueprint to be copied. It is a process of building from the unique ecological, cultural, and economic realities of each place. Yet despite these differences, several common themes emerged across all five regions.

- **FOOD AS THE DOORWAY.**

Across every country, initiatives are rebuilding local food systems through seed saving, agroecology, community-supported agriculture, food cooperatives, and place-based farming. Local food reconnects people to land, culture, health, livelihoods, biodiversity, and one another.

- **SAFEGUARDING KNOWLEDGE.**

A second theme is the preservation and renewal of knowledge. From Indigenous stewardship and traditional medicine to local seed saving, traditional crafts, and intergenerational learning, many initiatives are safeguarding threatened and marginalized knowledge systems that have evolved through long relationships between people and place.

- **GROWING THE COMMONS.**

Another recurring theme is the protection of the commons. Across all five regions, communities are finding ways to steward land, seeds, knowledge, housing, energy, and cultural resources collectively. Community land trusts, worker cooperatives, community energy systems, and shared gardens all reflect a common principle: that the foundations of life are best cared for through stewardship rather than extraction and profit-maximization.

- **REBUILDING COMMUNITY.**

Perhaps the deepest common thread is the rebuilding of relationships and community. Localization is not only about rebuilding economies; it is about reconnecting with one another and with the living world around us. At its heart lies a recognition of our interconnectedness—between people, across generations, within communities, and with nature. Human societies did not evolve in isolation. We survived and flourished through cooperation, reciprocity, and a deep awareness of our dependence on the ecosystems that sustain life. Many of the initiatives featured here are helping to renew that awareness, rebuilding the social and ecological bonds that underpin resilient communities and healthy societies.

ENCOURAGINGLY, MANY OF THESE EFFORTS ARE BEING LED BY YOUNG PEOPLE. FROM REGENERATIVE STORYTELLERS IN VIETNAM AND INDIGENOUS STEWARDSHIP PROGRAMS IN CALIFORNIA TO YOUTH-LED INITIATIVES IN GERMANY AND LADAKH, A NEW GENERATION IS DRAWING ON TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE WHILE CREATING INNOVATIVE RESPONSES TO CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES.



A MOVEMENT TAKES ROOT

During our mapping journeys, we found people already building fairer, healthier, and more resilient local communities, economies, and food systems.

The most striking discovery was not the lack of alternatives, but the lack of connection between them.

Again and again, in each region and country, we found people doing remarkably similar work while remaining largely unaware of one another. Even where vibrant local networks existed, they were rarely linked by a shared understanding of localization as a systemic response to today's interconnected crises.

Yet this mapping project revealed something deeply hopeful. Taken together, these initiatives are not isolated exceptions. They are expressions of a shared transition already underway.

The task ahead is not simply to create more initiatives. It is also to strengthen the connections between those that already exist: to share stories, exchange knowledge, build solidarity, influence policy, and deepen understanding of the larger systems that shape our lives.

By making visible what is already happening, we help people recognize that they are part of something much larger than their individual projects. We are weaving them into a movement.

“ACROSS ALL THE MAPPED REGIONS, WE FOUND PEOPLE ALREADY BUILDING FAIRER, HEALTHIER, AND MORE RESILIENT LOCAL COMMUNITIES, ECONOMIES, AND FOOD SYSTEMS. THE MOST CONSISTENT CHALLENGE WAS NOT THE LACK OF ALTERNATIVES, BUT THE LACK OF CONNECTION BETWEEN THEM.”





POLICY AND LOCAL ECONOMIES

Policies help shape the kind of society we live in by determining what activities are rewarded, what forms of ownership are encouraged, what kinds of development are supported, and ultimately how people think about progress, prosperity, and success.

While localization initiatives are sprouting from the grassroots all over the world those efforts can be nourished – or stunted – by government policy.

Too often, we see that policies – things like subsidies, taxes and regulations – tend to favor the big, corporate and global, while discouraging the small, independent and local. This reality surfaced repeatedly throughout the mapping process. Many communities are not only building alternatives; they are also spending considerable time and energy defending land, water, forests, local livelihoods, public health, and cultural heritage from economic pressures that current policies actively encourage.

The value of policy change was evident throughout this mapping journey.





In California, for example, public procurement policies are helping connect schools with local farmers, while community energy programs and public banking initiatives are creating new opportunities for local control and investment. Worker cooperative policies in cities such as Oakland and Berkeley are helping keep ownership and wealth rooted in communities.

For localization initiatives to survive, spread and flourish, policy changes are needed on multiple levels — from local councils and municipalities to national government and international agreements. Even if people are mostly able to influence public policy close to home, it is important to call for and support policy shifts at all levels that enable on-the-ground localization efforts to thrive.

To advance localization, there are many policies and policy tools that either constrain corporate power, or support local alternatives. Recent moves by some governments to withdraw from the systems of Investor-State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) (corporate courts) in trade treaties, which allow multinational corporations to sue governments for public-interest laws they dislike, is one example of the former. Public procurement policies that favour lo-



cal and ecological producers are an example of the latter. Government procurement decisions are one powerful way to institutionally and structurally boost local economies.

Agriculture offers a particularly striking illustration of the challenge. Governments worldwide provide enormous financial support to agriculture, yet the overwhelming majority of subsidies continue to support large-scale industrial production, while only a tiny fraction reaches small-scale, diversified, and organic farming systems. Similar patterns can be found across energy, finance, housing, transportation, and trade. Many more examples of policies that both constrain the bad, and enhance the good, can be found in Local Futures' Localization Action Guide.

The lesson emerging from these pages is clear: communities are not lacking creativity, commitment, or solutions. What is often missing is a policy environment that allows those solutions to flourish. Localization therefore requires not only grassroots initiative, but also changes to the rules of the game so that healthy local economies, thriving communities, and living ecosystems are rewarded rather than undermined.



BE PART OF THE STORY

In this magazine, you've followed the journeys of inspiring localization initiatives from diverse regions of the world, but it doesn't end here. As our contributors have shown so clearly, once we look with new eyes, beyond the dominant narrative of growth and the haze of mainstream media where disaster and breakdown are amplified for profit, we discover that life-affirming alternatives to the destructive status quo are spreading all around us. How can we better recognize, amplify, network and join them? How can we create further lighthouses of hope and possibility in our places?

Localization is not something that belongs only to farmers, activists, policymakers, or community leaders. It is something everyone can contribute to by supporting local producers, participating in community life, sharing skills, protecting local ecosystems, strengthening local democracy, resisting corporate control, or helping build connections between people that contributes to a larger transformation.

You can find hundreds of specific actions and strategies in Local Futures' [Localization Action Guide](#).

Perhaps one of the most important contributions we can make is helping to build a broader understanding of localization itself. The stories in this magazine demonstrate that localization is not simply about buying local or becoming more self-sufficient. It is a systemic strategy for strengthening wellbeing, resilience, democracy, cultural vitality, and ecological health by rebuilding connections between people, place, and the living world.

For many people, meaningful partici-

pation may begin with education and awareness. This means questioning some of the dominant assumptions of our time: that endless economic growth is synonymous with progress, that bigger and faster are always better, and that wellbeing can be measured primarily through consumption and GDP. It means exploring how the global economy often concentrates wealth and power while weakening local economies, communities, cultures, and ecosystems.

Understanding these larger patterns is an essential part of creating change. When we can connect the dots between seemingly separate crises—ecological breakdown, economic insecurity, loneliness, cultural erosion, declining democratic participation, and widening inequality—we begin to see that they often share common systemic roots. We also begin to recognize why localization offers such a powerful pathway forward.

At Local Futures, we refer to this broader work of connecting the dots as [Big Picture Activism](#). It combines practical action in our communities with a deeper understanding of the economic and cultural forces shaping our lives. It means helping make alternatives visible, challenging outdated assumptions about progress and development, sharing stories that inspire change, and building connections between initiatives so that isolated efforts become part of a larger movement.

The rewards are not only collective. Again and again, the people we met spoke of finding something that modern life often lacks: a stronger sense of belonging, purpose, connection, and meaning. In reconnecting with others and with the living world around us, we strengthen not only our communities but our own wellbeing.

The movement is already taking root. The next step is to make it visible, strengthen the connections between its many parts, and help it grow. The next chapter is ours to write.



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GERMANY - VIETNAM - CALIFORNIA, USA - LADAKH, INDIA - BRAZIL