

Summary

As ecological collapse plays out, it undermines our attempts to continue with business-as-usual. This submission builds on the 'Framework for Maximum Mitigation'¹. We describe how humanity can rapidly grow a united aspiration to peacefully eliminate ecological overshoot. It steers a path for humanity to successfully raise their emotional aptitude and resilience, in order to peacefully achieve the transition from an egotistical (ego) to an ecologically conscious mindset (eco), and thus result in behaviours which will grant us 'maximum mitigation' from climate and ecological collapse. Ego-centered attitudes and ethics which focus on an individual, group, nation or race, will expand to consider our global predicament and the injustice of our vastly different ecological footprints. Our thinking will also expand to consider the impact of our behaviour on future generations, i.e. inter-generational equity.

We describe how we can stimulate a global discussion about what we truly value, and what we truly wish to sustain. This will involve challenging many assumptions, and opening the dialogue on topics which are often excluded. We lay out how the collective ego to eco journey can begin, and how to ensure that it rapidly gathers momentum. The collective process of expanding our dialogue and envisioning will acknowledge our interdependence. This inclusive discussion will be based on the notion of equity between humans and all other inhabitants on Earth, maximising responsibility, capabilities, and opportunities with regards to all individuals and groups. This paper and the 'Framework for Maximum Mitigation' together envision a path forward, they have been shared widely on numerous platforms; in this way they are both examples of a process of 'collective learning and envisioning'² which stimulates and propagates the ego to eco transition.

Envisioning the Ego to Eco Journey

This section envisions how the media and many other institutions can help humanity to navigate the emotional evolution which is needed to cope with our reality peacefully and equitably, and with emotional maturity. The flowchart overleaf envisions interactions that will stimulate the transition, the lead actors will need to rapidly acquire the emotional maturity to avoid egotistical behaviour. Guidance concerning the rapid transition from ego to eco leadership and governance is provided in a later section. Key features of a peaceful and constructive ego to eco transition for any individual are as follows:

1. Attaining full awareness that ecological collapse is well underway and escalating
2. Full engagement in the collective learning and envisioning process, this requires a fully open dialogue with no Overton³ window restrictions
3. Rapidly acquiring the emotional maturity and resilience to reject egotistical behaviour
4. Full empowerment to contribute to mitigation efforts in a manner that maximises personal spiritual, mental, physical, emotional capacities, and achieves fulfilment
5. Local leaders are empowered and subsistence rations are available where needed

¹ <https://poemsforparliament.uk/framework/> A Framework for Maximum Mitigation

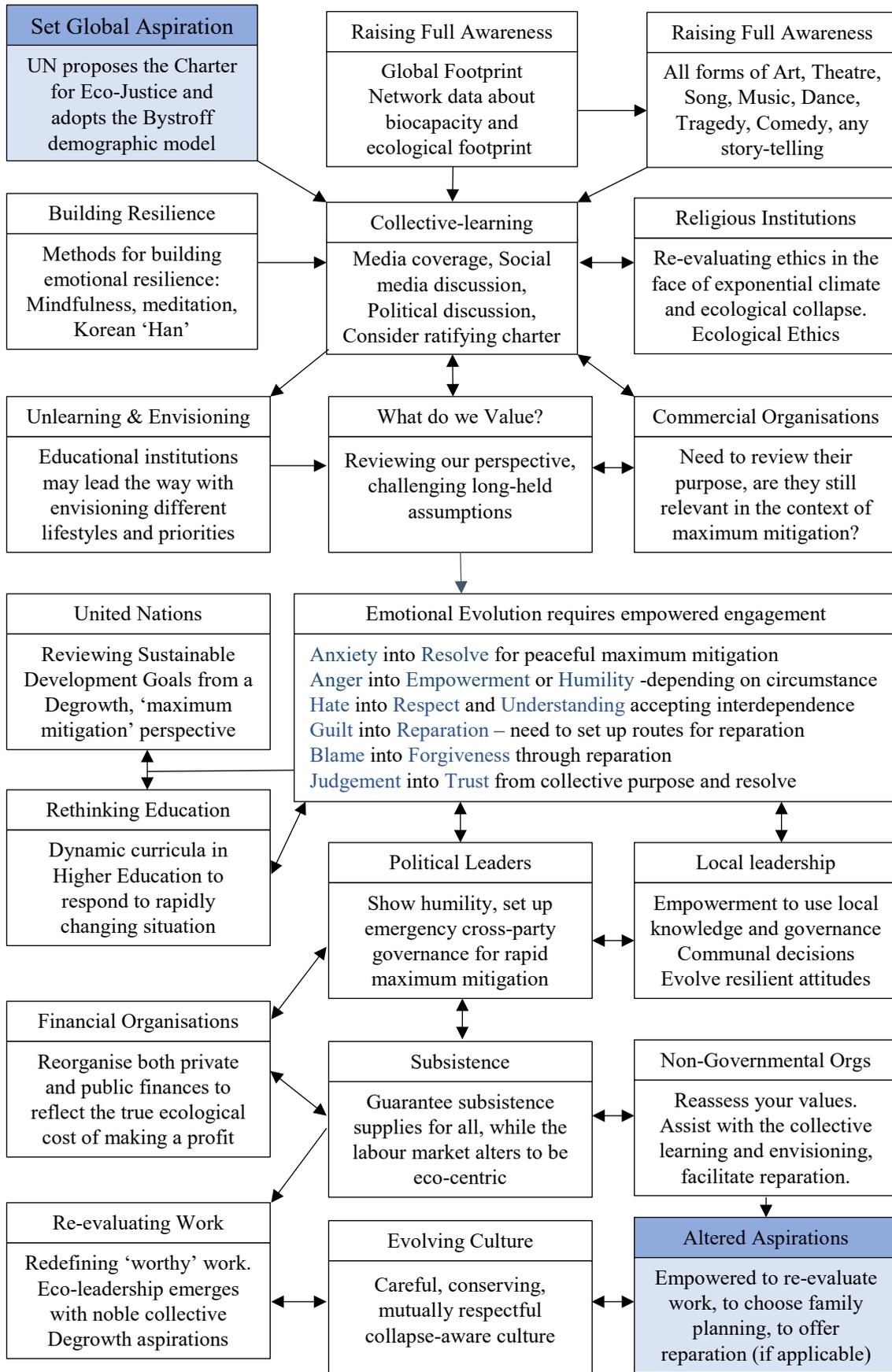
² <https://poemsforparliament.uk/unity-in-diversity/> see section 2.1.1 relating to SDG4 Education

³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Overton_window

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Date 21 August 2022 <https://poemsforparliament.uk/ego-to-eco/>

Inspiring Emotional Evolution



United Nations working with Media and Heads of State

The 'collective learning and envisioning' process is launched by the United Nations notifying Heads of State that it is requesting the media to present to the public the proposed 'Framework for Maximum Mitigation' and the scientific justification⁴ for the UN Charter for Ecological Justice. The communications to Heads of State and to the media offer advice about presentation, such as that provided in this paper, and in the article 'Cultural Causes of Climate Change'⁵. The Heads of State need to be invited to get involved, for they can assist significantly with the peaceful transition from the ego to eco mindset if they choose.

The media needs to be advised that the advisory material which is offered, is intended to ensure that they present our predicament in an emotionally mature manner, in such a way that will avoid widespread panic. A maturely delivered message will enable a positive multilateral discussion to evolve, which envisions our global society aspiring to maximum mitigation. By adopting an emotionally mature and positive style of presentation, the media can steer the general public past denial, and channel our strong emotions into vibrant and creative exploration of the options which realistically remain. Once the ideas gather support, then it will be necessary for a collective review of the Sustainable Development Goals, and modification of some of the teaching materials, in order to embrace the global aspiration to eliminate our global ecological overshoot. The post-Covid review paper by the UN Commons Cluster considered five key SDGs from the Degrowth perspective: 4,5,15,16, and 17.⁶

The media can help us achieve 'full awareness' by replacing myths with mature guidance, and discussion about possible routes to achieve maximum mitigation. Claiming the 'breakdown' is in the future constitutes unhelpful denial; both climate and ecological breakdown are now in the rapid exponential phase. The ego to eco journey starts with the realisation that we are making our predicament worse when we try to grow our Gross Domestic Product. Therefore, business-as-usual puts all our current aspirations, both personal and global, in jeopardy.

The media need to explain that GDP increases all the key drivers of ecological collapse, which in turn exacerbates financial collapse. The three key drivers to ecological collapse were identified through the $I=PAT$ ⁷ equation, they are: population size, and unwise use of affluence and technology. The media need to adopt a fully open dialogue with no Overton window restrictions. We need to 'unlearn' the sense of entitlement which was encouraged with the 'Declaration of Human Rights'. The 'right to a healthy environment' comes with the responsibility to stay within the carrying-capacity of our planet; we have not lived up to that obligation for many decades. The UN Charter for Ecological Justice is designed to address this oversight in our 'Human Rights'.

Our political leaders and Heads of State can assist the media by publicly ratifying the UN Charter for Ecological Justice. For example, in democracies, establishing an emergency cross-party government will raise public awareness about the urgent need for Degrowth objectives. This process will allow the media to present data relating to chronic ecological overshoot, together with the aspiration to eliminate the problem. In this manner the audience are

⁴ <https://medium.com/@barbarawilliams1/the-earth-charter-for-eco-justice-7e082e9f2ebe>

⁵ <https://medium.com/@barbarawilliams1/cultural-causes-of-climate-injustice-b59fb7d7f6de>

⁶ <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1gkBpFKkmnN3b5vI2yspVpjS0WVLuTS8Q/edi> Unity in Diversity HLPF

⁷ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/I_%3D_PAT

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emotionally prepared to welcome the aspiration for equitable Degrowth. If all the actors play their part with emotional maturity, then the general public will be eager to help to alleviate the situation, and the collective learning and envisioning process to evolve sensible strategies to transition to ecologically wise behaviour, will quickly gather momentum.

In countries where the environment is rich enough to support the current population, then they could consider adopting a steady-state economic model like 'Doughnut economics'. However, for maximum mitigation, it will be much wiser for us all to focus on equitable Degrowth objectives, until our global ecological overshoot has been totally eliminated.

Educational Institutions

Our educational priorities will need to change very rapidly as our climate and environment degrades. Higher education will need to adopt dynamic curricula to enable our bright young adults to get directly involved in our rapidly changing society, and to be empowered to shape the outcome and their own future. This is especially important since the older generations have now denied them the chance of a stable climate. Full awareness and empowerment is likely to give rise to a long-term global birth strike, until people can see hope for a safe future. We envisage that the demand for primary education will rapidly reduce, as young adults seek contraceptive measures to ensure that their children are not exposed to collapse.

Art, Performance, Story-telling

Our artistic community have a key role to play in lifting our spirits and raising our courage as awareness grows about the depth and severity of our predicament. Their skills are key to developing emotional maturity and resilience, however they will also need help acquiring emotional maturity, for melodrama and too much sentiment will be unhelpful at this stage.

Religious Organisations

Religious leaders have the power to resolve the conflict between pronatalism and the need to live within the biocapacity of our surroundings, they will need courage and humility in order to provide the best guidance for their followers. They can also assist our spiritual evolution to break the influence of coercive consumerism and the pride that comes with profit.

Commercial Organisations

Commercial organisations are advised to encourage the ego to eco leadership transition described later in this paper. This will steer a more open-minded and inclusive collective learning and envisioning process, as they strive to reinvent themselves into a product or service which is genuinely needed in the face of climate and ecological collapse. This envisioning process needs to be completely open to the wildest ideas, maintaining our resilience is essential; may be they can diversify to teach or perform song and dance which can lift our spirits. It is hoped that governments will provide interim support arrangements for those who find themselves unable to subsist during the Degrowth transition.

Public Services

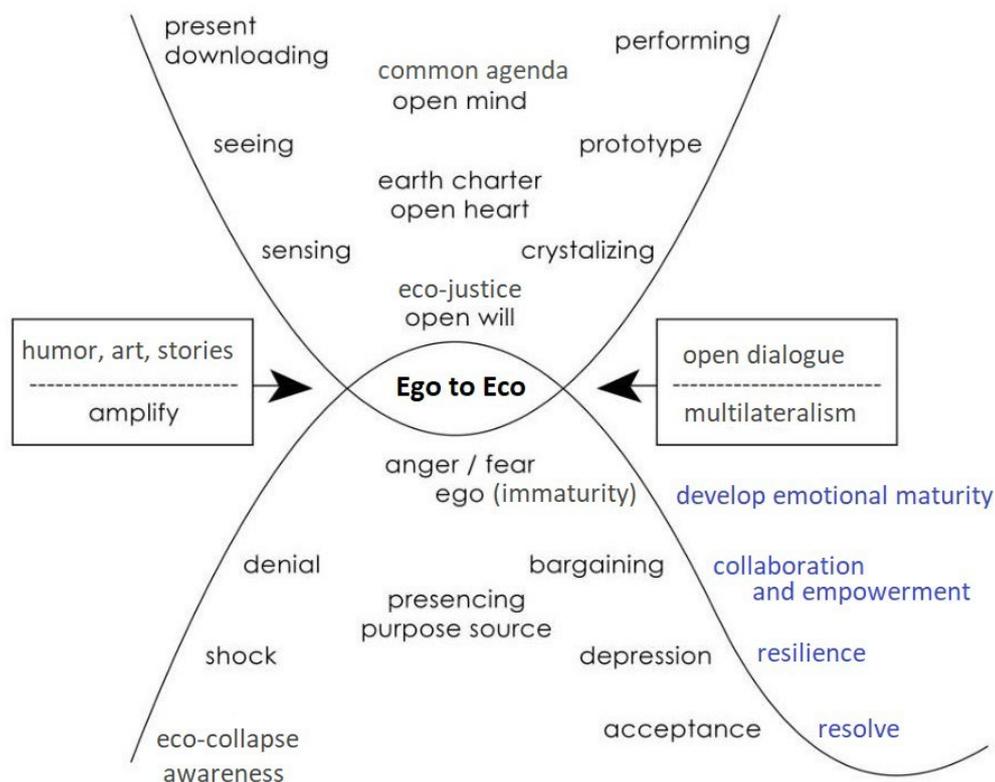
There may be aspects of public service the local community can assume, caring for the elderly or infirm is likely to have a lower ecological cost than the complex regimes that tight governance currently demands. Such governance will need to be reassessed from the

ecological perspective. It is envisaged that local self-rule will be less eco-costly than the elaborate judicial systems currently in place.

Theory U applied to the Ego to Eco transition

As our awareness of the reality of ecological collapse grows, we are increasingly experiencing downloading the magnitude of our predicament in our present moment. Collapse related events, or newly acquired knowledge can cause us anger, fear, or other such ego related reactions. The lower curve in the diagram below shows the ego to eco grief process⁸, as we realise that, as well as our ecosystems collapsing, humanity are still collectively exacerbating the collapse. With emotional maturity we can respond more positively to this realisation than the unhelpful bargaining, depression, and acceptance that we have been inclined to exhibit in the past.

The upper curve shows Theory U⁹ collaboration behaviour in the ego to eco journey. With adequate emotional maturity we can crystalize a new society from within, by embarking on a collective collaboration exercise rather than the egotistical ‘bargaining’ route often seen in the ‘grief’ cycle. When we steer our emotions in a more mature direction, and empower everyone to get involved in imagining a different way forward, then the most open-minded solutions to mitigate the dangers ahead can emerge, and we can build resilience and resolve.



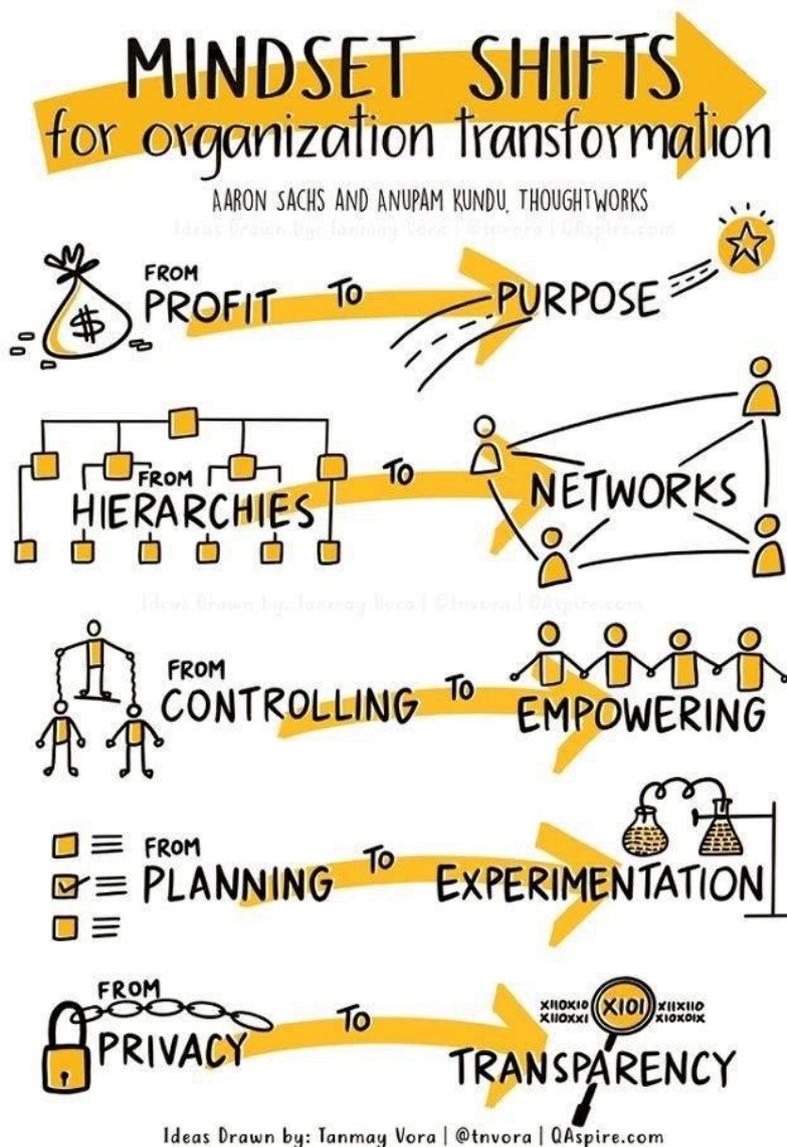
⁸ <https://www.tfec.ca/kubler-ross-5-stages-of-grief-in-2022/>

⁹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theory_U

The Ego to Eco Leadership

The transition to eco-leadership will demand a bold transformation both from within and from outside the leaders themselves, the diagram on the preceding page gave an overview of how we envision a constructive global shift from the egotistic perspective to a full awareness of the global ecological predicament which we now face. We have suggested that the group collaboration model known as Theory U can guide us to predict collective behaviour, and this model highlights the need to raise our level of emotional maturity, if we are to achieve maximum mitigation from ecological collapse.

In many ways organisations have already begun the mindset shift which is needed to produce effective eco-leaders. Many readers will already be familiar with the principles of organisational mindset shift which are shown in the graphic below; what is still lacking is the acceptance that continued pursuit of GDP growth is exacerbating our problems, and the emotional maturity to gain full awareness of the advanced state of global ecological collapse.



With the ratification of the UN Charter for Ecological Justice, we shall all aspire to the common purpose to replace the pursuit of economic growth with the goal to eliminate ecological overshoot, and begin to use ecological resources sparingly and equitably. This common goal needs a global society where decisions are not only based on the metaphysical, sociological and psychological sciences, but also on Nature, indigenous and local knowledge and insights. The higher level leaders will need to concentrate on organising the reparation and redistribution of resources to try and ensure that the majority of our population can continue to subsist, whilst trusting those in the local communities to self-organise and make communal decisions to achieve voluntary Degrowth and cope with extreme events as they arise.

Our local eco-leaders will need to facilitate the sharing of local capabilities, wisdom and intuition from the roots upwards as best they can in increasingly challenging circumstances. Their job is to be as open-minded as possible when strategies to lessen the local overshoot are discussed and considered. Local environments differ widely, and changes are likely to happen very rapidly, as soon as possible many powers needs be devolved to the local level. The eco-leadership style galvanises consensus from a community to agree the favoured strategy from a contemporary and intergenerational perspective, as well as the needs of Nature in all its forms. An eco-leader will need to successfully foster this perspective within the local community, so that everyone involved in the discussion recognises the importance of prioritising the needs of ecosystems for every decision. It will often be necessary to coax people to change personal aspirations to favour eco-regeneration or ecological justice.

Even with the best intentions, both misjudgements and tragic outcomes will still arise. We are seeing this phenomenon frequently, worthy leaders with the best intentions have met with insurmountable problems and failure. This has happened when our world had a predictable weather pattern and healthy ecosystems. Sadly, that world no longer exists, so our eco-leaders are starting out in a chaotic climate. With inclusive and open-minded eco-leadership, the whole community will share the responsibility for the outcomes of any communal decisions that are agreed.

Eco-leadership is about envisaging and evolving governance systems, societies, and economies which are inspired by the shared dominant aspiration to relieve the pressure on our ecosystems equitably and slow the ecological collapse. Collaboration, co-creation, reparation and facilitation are key, and will be the main focus of decision-making, negotiation and leadership overall. Diversity and multi-culturalism are embedded in the collective learning process. A healthy ego in this context blends together with the egos, emotions and capacities of many people to amplify the united focus and the shared short-term and long-term goals. A strong eco-leader will usually listen to both intuition¹⁰ and criticism, in order to ensure that everyone buys into both the decision and the consequences. There may be occasions when there is no time for this, in which case an eco-leader may simply invite those who wish to follow their lead, and new eco-leaders might take others in a different direction. The decision-making process needs to be totally dynamic because circumstances can change very rapidly; in chaotic collapse a decision made one day may be inappropriate the next.

¹⁰ <https://www.hultef.com/en/insights/research-thought-leadership/are-you-an-eco-ego-and-intuitive-leader/>
Garvey 2008; Hultef, 2022; Stokes and Dopson, 2020; O'Neil, Holland and Light)
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As ecological collapse plays out, eco-leaders will accept that although they are accountable for performance and results, they are not in control of outcomes. They will learn the wisdom of allowing the fast-changing context to shape their priorities. No human living or dead has had experience of surviving the harsh and rapid global environmental changes which humanity has now precipitated; leadership and governance both need to be very flexible and nimble. The financially costly judicial structures which we have in place in the modern world, would be best replaced with local self-rule as far as this is possible.

The open dialogue and a candid admission about the gravity of our predicament, together with the provision of subsistence essentials to those in need, will enable us to rise above many of the petty political differences and disagreements that are so divisive in our modern society. Our united purpose combined with emotional maturity, and empowerment for everyone to maximise their contribution, should re-establish trust between recognised leaders and those who prefer to offer their contribution from the side-line. The value of the contribution from the 'followers' will become increasingly apparent as collapse plays out, we have seen noble sacrifice before in both World Wars. Once the reality of our predicament becomes widely apparent, most people will demonstrate emotional maturity by abandoning the unhelpful theme of 'entitlement' which began with the 'Declaration of Human Rights', and be willing to earn the right to live by respecting our environment and working to reduce demand until we live within the biocapacity available.

Ego to Eco Governance

Eco governance needs to be guided by the principle of living within the biocapacity of our environment, while safeguarding the rights and wellbeing of current and future generations. In 1995 Herman Daly and Donella Meadows defined criteria for authentic sustainability which are shown below. We recommend that these be used as guidelines in all governance which relates to sustainability.

- Renewable resources shall not be used faster than they can regenerate.
- Pollution and wastes shall not be put into the environment faster than the environment can recycle them or render them harmless.
- Non-renewable resources shall not be used faster than renewable substitutes (used sustainably) can be developed.
- The human population and the physical capital plant must be kept at levels low enough to allow the first 3 conditions to be met.
- The previous 4 conditions must be met through processes that are democratic and equitable enough that people will willingly accept them.

As chaotic climate and ecological breakdown gather pace, eco-leaders will need to anticipate a rapidly changing world. Our evolving society will recognise our global interdependence when tackling the growing challenges, it will be guided by our remorse for the mistakes made in the past and our resolve to make reparation both to each other and to Nature. As soon as this emotional evolution gathers pace, we shall begin to identify aspects of our costly judicial systems which are no longer relevant and set about dismantling them, replacing them by empowering local leaders to make judgements and agree locally on appropriate strategies, such as restorative justice for those who persist with the egotistical perspective.

At the global level, institutions like the United Nations and the Global Footprint Network will need to work on high-level arrangements to monitor and compare global progress towards minimising our ecological footprint. The review of the Sustainable Development Goals to embrace voluntary equitable Degrowth will need to be rapidly completed. There are already arrangements in place for Voluntary National Reviews, these will acquire a new focus and become much more relevant in affluent countries, who have much more to achieve in terms of reducing their gross ecological footprint. It will be helpful to have a recognised News channel which reports on progress towards the global aspiration to eliminate our ecological overshoot. This will provide a means to share local experiences, and methods of reparation and will be a vehicle for the process of collective learning and envisioning. If the role is adopted by a prestigious organisation like the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) then they will have a head-start in terms of audience trust.

Assessing whether our decisions are wise for the health and wellbeing of all, including Nature, will often be very complex. The most simple approach is to be guided by the desire to reduce all the factors which I=PAT warns us are damaging to the environment. The mindset shift from profit to purpose is one of the most challenging that will face those in the modern world. The transition to successful eco governance is only complete once we appreciate the need to minimise our energy usage in order to foil the Jevons paradox¹¹, which warns us that any improvements in energy efficiency will be countered by subsequent increases in demand.

In conclusion, it is in the interest of us all, to slow down climate change and biodiversity loss through a model which will facilitate the transition from the egotistic mindset to being aware of our global ecological overshoot. The die is now cast, we need leadership which will steer the most peaceful route towards maximum mitigation during chaotic collapse.

There is no Escape from global Ecological Collapse

There are significant lessons be learned from the hurricane Katrina¹² disaster, where those who were trying to escape the disaster area were prevented from 'emigrating' when the only way out of the city was to cross a bridge connecting the mostly black city of New Orleans with the mostly white suburbs of Jefferson Parish, known as the 'West Bank'. When questioned about these incidents later, the Jefferson Parish Sheriff confirmed that his office closed the bridge, explaining that his Parish did not have the resources to care for thousands of needy people. This sad tale is a warning to those affluent countries who are the primary cause of the human induced ecological collapse. When economic migrants arrive, it is important to remember that affluent countries are still promoting the flawed concept of GDP growth.

Conclusion

The transition from ego to eco leadership has been evolving for some time, as many organisations are already focussing less on profit and more on purpose, and are moving from hierarchy to networking, from control to empowerment, from planning to experimentation, and from privacy to transparency.

¹¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jevons_paradox

¹² <https://items.ssrc.org/understanding-katrina/the-criminalization-of-new-orleanians-in-katrinawake>

Our modern leaders at the moment are faced with bewildering and rapid external changes. The modern infrastructure was built in a world with reliable climate and rich ecosystems, neither of these conditions apply nowadays; until we collectively accept that sad fact, we cannot break from the constraints that our dependence on the growth economic model has formed in our minds. For any genuine mitigation to commence we shall need to embrace equitable Degrowth objectives with enthusiasm. To do this we need to see the dangers in all three of the drivers that were identified through the I=PAT equation:

- The culture of pronatalism promotes population increase
- Uncontested, ecologically costly health care slows population decrease
- Coercive consumerism and financial aspirations are ecological damaging
- The belief that technology can save us is unfounded; the reverse is true, our use of technology usually causes more rapid and greater environmental damage.
- The Jevons paradox demonstrates how our demand has always increased to exceed any benefits that we achieved from efficiency.

Many of these issues lie outside the window of discourse at the moment. This paper has described how we can initiate a process where we mature emotionally to accept our tragic predicament, and rapidly develop the emotional resilience and the resolve to begin a process where we collectively envision a society which uses the best of our ingenuity from our past cultures, blending indigenous and local knowledge with our science, engineering, technology and mathematics. This collective process of realistic envisioning, will evolve a global society that is willing to make the many noble sacrifices needed to give us a chance to soften the chaotic chain of events which we have now initiated with our poor ecological accounting.

We are reliant on fossil fuels for short-term survival, but using them drives us into near-term extinction. Growth economics creates the illusion of 'wealth', putting 'profit' over the health of our ecosystems. All profit originates from natural resources; as ecological collapse plays out, money is devalued and financial collapse is increasingly likely. We need to develop our emotional maturity to accept reality and urgently reduce our impact on our ecosystems.

About the Author

The original submission to the UN declared that the paper was written by Lavinia Warners in collaboration with 'Poems for Parliament', i.e. Barbara Williams. Lavinia Warners inspired Barbara to write the paper and contributed some significant ideas, she also had editorial veto on the final content. Barbara is a Degrowth activist¹³, she is the author of 'Saving Us From Ourselves'¹⁴. Barbara was lead editor for the paper submitted by the UN Commons Cluster for HLPF 2022¹⁵ which elaborates upon many of the ideas expressed in this paper. Barbara is a retired software developer, has a BSc in Mathematics and Physics and lives in Oxfordshire in the UK, she is an ardent paradigm shifter.

¹³ <https://www.girlplanet.earth/barbara-williams> Stable Planet Alliance have recognised the Author's activism

¹⁴ <https://poemsforparliament.uk/sufo/> Saving Us For Ourselves, free book by the author of this Framework

¹⁵ <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1gkBpfKkmmN3b5vl2yspVpjS0WVLUtS8Q/edit> Unity in Diversity HLPF The Ego to Eco Journey

Lavinia Warnars submitted the paper to the public consultation held by the UN High-Level Advisory Board. She is an ecopreneur on a mission: to stimulate the Ego to Eco shift in leaders and governance, in order for the world to thrive and live in peace and harmony with nature. She holds a BSc. And MSc. In Political and Social Sciences of the Environment (Cum Laude) (Radboud University, 2005-2010), an Advanced Master in International Development (Radboud University, 2013), and a Postgraduate Certificate in Sustainable Business (University of Cambridge, 2020/21). Lavinia has extensive experience in the field of sustainability and is the Founder of Ego2Eco Governance, Economic and Societal Transformation and iEarth www.iearth.nl which offers Sustainability Leadership & Coaching.

Lavinia Warnars chose to distance herself from the radical ideas in the paper in an email sent to Barbara Williams on 21 August 2022 15:41. They subsequently agreed on the above rewording to the authorship section.