

# ***Global Teach-In***

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## ***The Biggest Challenge in Human History***

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# *Part One*

## *Seeing the system clearly*

*“System blindness permeates all facets of western society”*

**Bob Doppelt**

*When I get discouraged I turn to inspiring thoughts like this*

*“Everything that is done in the world is done by hope”*

**Martin Luther King**

*I'd add love, courage and truth*



***Climate change is just one symptom of our failure to live in harmony with our planet and all life on it, including each other***

## *Five inseparably linked issues*

- *Climate change – some say 5 years to a tipping point*
- *Peak everything – not just Oil which made our extraordinary way of life possible*
- *We are destroying the ecosystem on which all life depends, the air, soil and water*
- *Poverty and economic injustice*
- *Violence, war, terrorism and the threat of nuclear annihilation*

***Our home is “Spaceship Earth”***

***What we are doing to it***

***Countries getting wealthier***

***BUT..... All the stuff we use USES UP the planet and heats it up - our cars, our phones, power tools, our gadgets, our food***



***And it's not making us happier***

# ***Spiralling inequality: The 1 % are getting richer and the 99% are getting poorer***

***The wealth of the world's 475 billionaires is now worth the combined income of the bottom half of humanity***





***London is the most unequal city in the Western world  
richest tenth of the population owning 273 times the wealth owned by the  
bottom tenth - around the same levels as the beginning of the 19th century***



**Professor Dorling, Sheffield University, reported in Guardian and Daily Mail.**



# ***Symptoms of our failure to live in harmony with mother earth and all life on it, including each other***

***Families living in burning open coal mines in India, parched French wheat field,  
oil from tar sands in Alaska and gas from “fracking”***



# *Imagine ..... London*



# *Kiribati – they'll have to leave*





***Air pollution in Britain = 200,000 early deaths a year (FOE)***



# Madness

## **When ....**

- *We're already consuming 30% more than the earth's bio-capacity can sustain - and rising*
- *Population set to grow from 7bn to 9bn by 2050*
- *Poor peoples' expectations are rising*

## **Current orthodoxy defies common sense**

- *Continuous growth – measured by GDP*
- *Consume more and more to be happy and provide jobs*
- *Cut, cut, cut = more distress, more costly benefits and more debt*

**Suicide and ecocide** - *Instead of dealing with the biggest threat to humanity, Governments are fixated on the economic crisis they created with the banks*

# *The global system exposed*

- *System fuels climate change and consumes more than “Spaceship Earth” can provide – “Limits to Growth” Club of Rome, 1972 Destroys the ecosystem*
- *Systematically transfers wealth from 99% to the 1%. Bears down on people who make things, serve and feed us. Taxpayers subsidise the 1%*
- *Big Cos abuse power – have hi-jacked government, democracy, our streets & communities - our minds taken over*
- *Mono-thinking creates mono-culture, mono-crops, mono-everything, “clone towns” (With thanks to Vandana Shiva and nef)*
- *Our sovereignty at the mercy of global financial markets*
- *Supported by war and a huge military economy - destroys precious lives; \$ trillions that could be better spent*

***“Corporations are designed to externalise their costs”***

***Joel Bakan***

***“Corporate social responsibility is an oxymoron”***

***Mary Zepernick***



# What drives the system

*“When the capital development of a country becomes a by-product of a casino, the job is likely to be ill-done” J M Keynes*

- *Debt Money – the need to pay interest and repay debt fuels unsustainable growth.*
- *Great God GDP measures GD Cost and “harms” – not a measure of progress or real wealth*
- *Unrestricted Free Trade in pursuit of lowest cost an absurdity – exploits and destroys local economies including ours – in the end it costs more*
- *Ideology - instead of what works, based on rigorous research and involving people “on the ground” first*
- *Big government, big tech, quick fixes – not Subsidiarity - getting things done at the right level*
- *Cuts and “structural adjustment “– didn’t work in South – why would it work for us in North?*

## ***At the root - an unsustainable financial system***

- ***Debt Money - 97% of our money created by banks “out of thin air” for profit; everything costs more including housing and infrastructure; creates massive debt burden especially for young, poor and poor countries***
- ***Banking system unfit for purpose - needs to be entirely restructured***
- ***Unstable financial markets - about 90% transactions are speculative - Casino creates instability & crises***
- ***Lack of regulation and due diligence - e.g. subprime crisis, credit crunch, recession, bailouts; “taxpayer pays” encourages irresponsibility***
- ***Perverse taxation and subsidies penalise work and enterprise; reward the unsustainable and “harms”***
- ***Blue suit corruption - vast avoidance and evasion - tax havens in UK crown dependencies. Over half of all banking assets and a third of foreign direct investment by multinational corporations are routed offshore*** (Nicholas Shaxson, Guardian, Sunday 9 January 2011)

## *Flawed democratic system obstructs change*

- *Government lacks political will - short term perspective, unrepresentative, not inclusive or participatory*
- *Vested interests prevail – lack of integrity and diligence*
- *Centralised power rather than Subsidiarity*
- *Adversarial politics when collaboration and finding common ground needed*
- *Media “stories”, sensation, conflict, violence, celebs = uninformed, confused, depressed electorate*
- *Disempowered citizens - alienated, cynical, frustrated, disengaged from politics, think there is nothing they can do*

***Many ordinary people know  
We're being taken for a ride; we're heading for  
catastrophe.***

***Desire for change is everywhere; yearning for  
something better.***

***So, why are we so compliant?  
Why do most of us stand by and let it happen?***

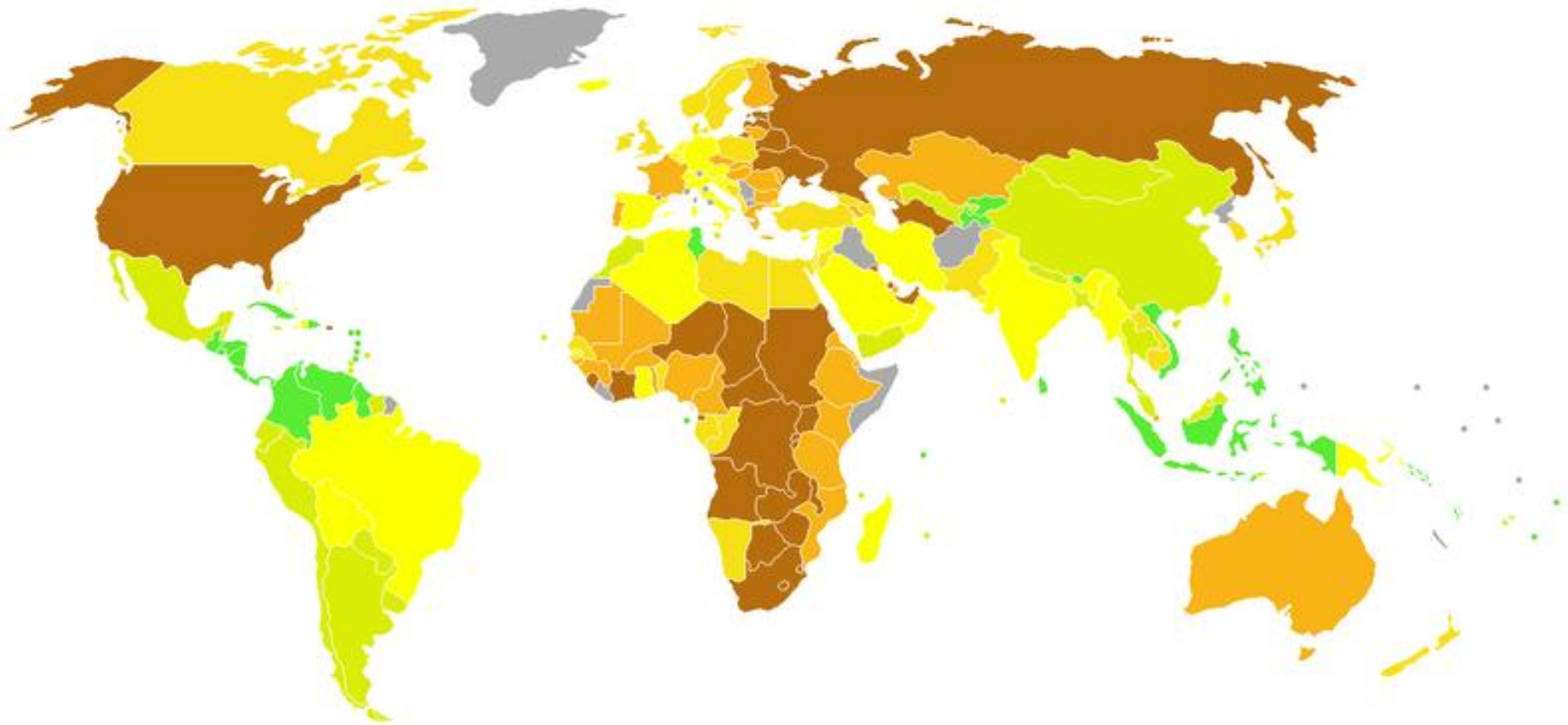
## ***Part Two***

### ***The Alternative***

***A Global Economy whose purpose is the  
Wellbeing of all, including all life on the  
planet***

# ***Wellbeing*** (nef)

***Happier countries are green, yellow; least happy are brown.***



## ***We have to transform the system***

- ***First, see it clearly***
- ***Patching it up, addressing symptoms, won't work***
- ***Transformation requires a whole system, radical approach – not bright ideas but what works***
- ***It needs to engage everyone – 7bn***
- ***It requires democracy that it is inclusive, participatory, represents our full diversity and is collaborative***
- ***We need different values, a new identity, a balance of feminine and masculine energies***



## ***The alternative – A Great Transition to Wellbeing Economics*** (nef)

- ***A double win – the way out of depression and environmental catastrophe***
- ***“Prosperity without growth” Tim Jackson and Lester Brown’s “Plan B 4.0: Mobilizing to Save Civilization”***
- ***Green the economy - localise, bio-regionalise, “glocalisation”, make global trade the exception, FEET index. Sovereignty and security***
- ***Creating the good society - providing opportunity, education, health, good work - costs less***
- ***New values - not stuff, power and status but fulfilment and joy, one world***
- ***“Contraction and Convergence”- we have to face it***

***But How? Ross Jackson’s “Occupy World Street” - A Gaian league of sovereign nations with supporting institutions. James Hansen - A global carbon tax***

***FEET index = foreign exchange earnings per transport tonne***

## *New Ideas for a sustainable, more equal society*

- *Reform Money - end “debt money” for profit; debt money costs more*  
*Only central banks issue currency to meet defined national objectives*
- *Reform the banks - redefine and separate their roles: investment banks, “boring” banks; national, regional, local banks*
- *Regulate the markets -Tobin tax on transactions*
- *Tackle excessive top pay – transparent pay ratios, supervisory boards, shareholder responsibility*
- *Citizens Income - a right for everyone including students and pensioners - ending the humiliation of benefits - can be sourced - may cost the nation less*
- *Reform taxation, subsidies and accounting - Reward sustainable enterprise and work; tax “harms”; Carbon Tax; Land Value Tax ; Tobin Tax; end avoidance and evasion. Not GDP but a real measure of wealth*
- *Reduce military and arms expenditure - spend more on resolving conflict and preventing war*

# ***Green Homes and Communities***

***Kevin McCloud's Triangle project, Swindon; Bedzed in Sutton; Hockerton, Southwell, Notts***



# ***Sustainable Cities***



***[http://www.ski-epic.com/amsterdam\\_bicycles/](http://www.ski-epic.com/amsterdam_bicycles/)***



# ***Local Food***

*our garden*



# *How to make it happen – a sustainable, fairer society.....*

*Include all 193 nations **in voting in the UN;**  
**not just wealthy western ones***

*Create “win; win” solutions*

*Sit in a circle – not opposing rows*

*Better informed citizens*

*Better democracy: **fully representative, fair voting, people are  
involved and feel listened to***

*Two options: Collaborating **to survive, not shouting at each  
other** or face Catastrophe*



*Activism is my rent for living on the planet* Alice Walker





# *Will our time go down in history as the one that redefined global politics?*

**Growing activism:** *“Arab spring”, Occupy: London’s St Pauls and Bank of Ideas, Frankfurt, Madrid, Rome, Hong Kong, Sydney; UK Uncut, social networks, thousands of campaigns and coalitions aiming to initiate global change and change capitalism*



## ***You 7bn have power – use it!***

- ***Create a vision for the world you want – dream***
- ***Who's responsible? 1/3 individuals; 2/3 governments, say Friends of the Earth***
- ***Be the change – personal actions: family, friends, community, school, work, purchasing power and networking, the 4 Rs - not enough***
- ***Act Global – 7bn of us have power. Get involved: lobby, campaign, educate ourselves and politicians***
- ***Be hopeful, inquiring, sceptical, open-minded – hardly anything is certain. Pessimism is an indulgence we can't afford. Collectively we find our way forward***
- ***Use “Key Campaigns for System Change” and my new book “A Better World is Possible” and articles at [www.bruce-nixon.com](http://www.bruce-nixon.com)***

# ***Short Statement***

# ***We've been warned: We face environmental catastrophe if we don't act in time - Political will is lacking***

## ***Key positive proposals:***

- ***Fully involve all nations, especially smaller and most vulnerable ones,— countries that hitherto have not had a voice.***
- ***A global carbon tax – James Hansen.***
- ***Create a Gaian League of Nations with Gaian Institutions who are relatively self-sufficient and already on the path that others can gradually join – Ross Jackson “Occupy World Street”.***
- ***A Great Transition to a Wellbeing Economy (nef) would solve the economic and environmental crises at the same time***

## ***How to make them happen:***

- ***Be one of 7BN Activists – get involved; demand that governments do what's needed.***
- ***Do whatever you think will make the biggest difference.***

## ***Additional Data***

# ***Two Key Insights***

***Breakdowns lead to breakthroughs***

***The power of declaring the possibility of a great endeavour! Apollo space mission***

# ***We are taking far more than our share***

- *We are consuming **130%** (rising) of the earth's bio-capacity, wasting it massively; 7bn of us now, estimated 9bn by 2050; demand for power to rise 53% by 2030 unless...*
- *Eco-footprints: **LA rate = 5 planets; London = 3. Hectares per person: US 12.2 UK 6.29 (really double that), India 1.06. Safe, fair target 1.8 by 2050***
- *Carbon footprints: - CO2 tonnes p.p. p.a. **Qatar 69, US 20, UK 10 (double that), India 1.2, China 3.8, most African countries below 1. Safe 2050 target for planet 2 tonnes p.p. = 90% reduction for us***
- *Real costs of oil and cheap everything = "externalised costs" **a billion are hungry, a billion overweight, wars, millions of people displaced***
- *Wars in Iraq and Afghanistan **thousands killed, injured or displaced and almost half the world's 11 million refugees created***
- *Climate change **kills 300,000 p.a. in poor countries***
- *Misdirected spends –research goes into what makes money, not what prevents wars, harms and disease*



# ***Continuous economic growth isn't working***

- *It fuels climate change, global warming and degradation of the earth*
- *Far too slow and inefficient in reducing poverty*
  - *Until the eighties the poverty gap was closing*
  - *Between 1990 and 2001, for every \$100 of growth in the World's per person income, only \$0.60 contributed to reducing poverty below the \$1 - a - day level*
  - *UK growth benefits the richest 10 % 10 times more than the poorest 10 %*
  - *UK top executives earn nearly 100 times more than a typical employee. Ten years ago the differential was 39. US CEOs were paid 344 times more than workers in 2008, up from 104 in 1991*
  - *The wealth of the world's 475 billionaires is now worth the combined income of the bottom half of humanity*
- *More wealth does not = more happiness*
- *Where the income gap is highest so are all the costs of unhappiness*

# ***The nine planetary boundaries***

***We are in the danger zone of the first two***

- ***climate change***
- ***stratospheric ozone***
- ***land use change***
- ***freshwater use***
- ***biological diversity***
- ***ocean acidification***
- ***nitrogen and phosphorus inputs to the biosphere and oceans***
- ***aerosol loading***
- ***chemical pollution***

***Stockholm Resilience Centre***

# ***Deaths from war and violence will grow***

## ***Particularly from resource conflicts***

- ***1.2bn war deaths since 1700***
- ***40m 1945 to 2000***
- ***War in Iraq and Afghanistan thousands killed, injured or displaced, almost half the world's 11 million refugees created and ruined lives***
- ***Rising annual road deaths and injuries – now 1.275m expected to rise 50% by 2030 predominantly in poor countries, highest amongst young men, far exceeding deaths in war and conflict.***