

Reworlding 2022

Harvest



Content

Our Why	2
Reworlding 2022	2
East Africa Session	3
About the music video	3
From the people leading the East Africa Assemblies	4
Reflections from Anahí Pacheco Aranedo, in Chile.	7
Heard in the session...	10
Resources	10
Chile Session	11
About the music Video	11
A story about a new, grassroots Constitution	12
Small-group inquiry: what would you change in your constitution?	13
Reflections from David Lees in Scotland	13
Questions and answers from Puli...	14
Resources	18
Scotland Session	19
About the music video	19
About the Climate Assembly in Scotland	20
Ishbel about St Fittick's Park in Torry	23
Scott Herret - Torry People's Assembly	24
Reflections from the Circle	25
Resources	28
Gratitudes	29
Get in touch	29

Our Why

Our political, economic and social systems are broken. They are based on breaking our relationship with human and non-human others, rather than on ensuring our collective wellbeing. There are far better ways to make our collective decisions, ways that draw on the best of human nature and which enable everyone to live fulfilling, abundant lives.

Can the urgency of this moment and a deep listening approach bring us together across issues and movements? Can local and grassroots assembly processes enable us to effect immediate local changes, build alliances to bring pressure on the existing system, and - most importantly - catalyse systemic change?

Reworlding 2022

REWORLDDING 2022 took place on October 1st. In a day of online sessions, we heard from communities from different corners of the world about how they have been using assemblies as means to challenge existing power structures. They were invited to share their experience of assemblies or community-based decision making processes around key questions like:

- Why their assembly/ies began - what led to the decision to hold (the first) one?
- How do they work, what has been challenging and what has been most successful?
- How do they try to notice and prevent colonised habits from taking over in the assemblies?
- What have the assemblies led to, what happens next?

Our aim was to create a space where we could learn and connect with one another, be honest about our mistakes and failures as well as celebrating our successes and manage the roller-coaster of depression and elation in this work - and in our sharing with one another.

Sparked by [Grassroots to Global](#) (G2G), this gathering built on Reworlding 2021 and the [Sunset Assembly](#) we held just before COP26. G2G explores, supports and creates decision making processes that allow us to participate in our full human-ness to create systemic change.

In addition to these sessions, we held two 'Riverbank' sessions, the day before (30th Sept) and the day after (2nd Oct) the main sessions. These offered a more personal, deeper space to share and reflect on our experiences on assemblies, on the sessions, on our vision for a different way of doing politics.

This harvest contains notes from each of the sessions of our main event day.

Session 1: East Africa



East Africa

Where 10 communities from across Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania are coming together to use assemblies to challenge the colonial conservation model that is evicting them from their lands.

You can watch the recording of this session [here](https://youtu.be/JfFhHRL8WYk): <https://youtu.be/JfFhHRL8WYk>

About the music video

The song we played at the beginning of our session is by the Mosopysiek community of Benet, Uganda. It is a sad song. They sang it with their hearts filled with misery. It says, we've been crying for a long time in vain. We've lost our children, our husbands and our homes. Questions... Who is going to open Benet, our home Land for us? Where is the government/leaders? If indeed they don't recognize the Benet community, then why do they come for our votes?

You can see an unplugged version of it here: <https://youtu.be/O4lM60GbgQY>

Eva Schonveld introduced the session, emphasising the neighbourly spirit of this gathering, the intention to come and witness what the communities are bringing, what went well and what didn't go so well. Not trying to impress anybody but trying to stay in our stories, taking a step together in working out how to take power with and how to put an end to power over.

The session brought in members of ten communities from Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania who came together to create the East Africa Assembly on Land, Justice

and Indigenous Peoples Cooperation. They challenge the colonial approaches to conservation that are destroying their ways of life and their land. Over 14 million people have been evicted from their ancestral lands in the name of conservation. And they are the very people who know how to care for the land. The Assembly they held in June was the first of a series of Women-led assemblies aiming to put an end to the appropriation of indigenous land.

A few days before this session, the [Ogiek of Mount Elgon won a landmark court case for the return of their land](#). Sadly, the [Maasai](#) in Tanzania lost [their court case to stop evictions](#).

From the people leading the East Africa Assemblies

The following was mostly shared by Teresa Chemosopt, Ogiek of Chepkitale, Mount Elgon.

Why did the assemblies begin, what led the communities to decide to assembly?

We wanted to create a space for women, so that they could express themselves, enabling them to build their own capacity. During the last years of fighting for the tenure rights of the lands, men have been at the forefront. Involving women has been fruitful and has had a positive impact. The roles of women have been various and important: as court witnesses, as petitioners, as songwriters, communicating and sharing the stories.

We also wanted to build a strong movement for these three East African countries, not separate, but to build each other, strengthen each other, motivate each other.

They began as an exchange programme for women of two communities—one in Kenya and one in Uganda. This was very successful, the women were very happy, and came up with some important areas to continue developing for women: governance and leadership, access to workshops, having their own space to share. The first assembly held in Tanzania, inspired and fueled by that exchange programme, was between 10 communities from Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania. It is an assembly led by women but not excluding men.

What was challenging?

There have been many challenges... a few of them were mentioned.

Finances have been a challenge. There's little funding for travelling and attending, limiting the number of people who can travel. Most people are willing to participate but don't have the resources to travel. We only scratch where our hand reaches.

The issue of holding space in one's own space. We want communities to experience each other's environment. That is not possible where people have been evicted! Most of our communities are living outside their land. Most communities are facing the struggle and organising the assemblies outside their own land. Also, a landless community needs to rent a space.

The government sometimes feels that we're creating a movement against it. This increases the bureaucracy, and we have to ask for special permits dealing with security and such. Since they've deprived us of our livelihood, they don't take these meetings positively.

In what ways did we deal with the issue of noticing and preventing colonising habits from taking over the assemblies?

"Our assembly is still a young baby"

We're learning from our own experience. In Tanzania, we invited government officials. In the first assembly, they took over the first day or three, to speak about the positives of what they've done—some of it even appropriated—, and ignored all the negatives. Ignoring the harm that they not only have done but were doing during the meeting: more evictions, more killings, more people needing to flee to other countries.

From that we learned that if you invite government officials, it has to be planned very well: know when to invite them, how much time you will give them. Also, we ask our assembly members who they suggest we invite. In Kenya, no

government officials were invited. Part of removing the colonial habits is to create our own space where people feel free to open up to express themselves.

We are opposing the colonial way of "conservation", because it only promotes the interests of the few and destroys the only sustainable way of caring for our environment.

What have the assemblies led to, what comes next?

They have energised us. They have brought us together. Women have been empowered, given a space, agency to work for their communities.

The assembly came up with joint, very good [declarations](#). They were written not from a conference centre, but from the land where the communities live. They are declarations without appropriation, from the land. They resonate with the people who hear it.

Unfortunately, they weren't adopted at the national, governmental level, we had to push and sell and change them. Many were simply removed. There was a lot of outreach, many people came together to bring all this to the media. We could make statements to the national and international media condemning the dire situation of our communities, declaring how the governments are not adhering to the constitutions.

It was a place to learn from each other's struggles. We could share information about organisations, national and international, some of which are supporting people's land rights, some of which are enabling the government to continue land-grabbing in the name of conservation.

Our next steps...

As we continue planning and working, we continue facing challenges.

We're still pursuing our governments, demanding that they stop perpetrating injustices to their people, as in the case Tanzania. We're going to hold each other's hands, we're going to motivate each other, we're going to push for these things, and for the government and these assemblies to adhere to the constitution.

We feel we're going to motivate our brothers and sisters from around the world: persistence, resilience. We will pursue the international organisations that are supporting a colonised type of conservation, perpetuating the harm that it's being done to the people who rightfully could live in and care for the land.

We will work together to see that the constitution, the same law that restituted the lands to the Ogiek, will be applied and respected in all other communities in Kenya, where it is still being ignored.

Reflections from Anahí Pacheco Araneda, in Chile.

A big celebration that the assemblies, the communities are being led by women, but in a way that it is a dance with men. *It brings me joy that we're different beings, beyond being women, willing to be the same in different places of this planet.*

When we meet and express and listen, we're creating a new collective narrative that transforms reality. Despite all the difficulties, I believe we're doing deep work in the noosphere that is transforming the world.

The fact that people are being killed, are starving even as we speak, needs to be said, needs to be shared, time and again.

In South America we've had at least three waves of colonisation, the physical—taking our land and people, the spiritual—imposing beliefs, and capitalism—the god money took over all the minds and hearts.

We carry an outer and an inner colonisation. I ask myself: when are we working for colonisation? When are we bringing our own patterns of colonisation to our work, our transformation? I believe that vulnerability and humbleness is allowing this deep transformation: I see myself and my dear friends having those patterns, because colonisation has been so deep.

If we want to transform something outside, we need to keep on transforming ourselves. It will not be a work that has an end. There's power in connecting with the spiritual powers, what is not seen. We're held and guided. Giving time to

connect with that larger entity, with our ancestors, allows for us to invite and work towards inner and outer healing.

About the Ogiek winning the case to restore their lands.

Winning the case has brought happiness, not only to the Ogiek but to other communities who now feel more motivated to continue the work, the fight. It is something that has been going on for decades, the work, the beatings, the confrontations, the resistance has been going on for a long time, the winning is part of that long process.

The win is also for the fallen heroes, for the ancestors. Now more than ever their voices call the people back to their land. This win was a work of many people, from within and without the Ogiek.

It is also not the end of the work for the Ogiek, they are intent on supporting other communities to win their lands back, support each other, motivate each other. Learn and share what they've learned. Other communities feel inspired, although their pain is tangible. It is a long process without a certain end. However, the win has brought a renewed sense of hope.

From the circle...

Marc: Working across the boundaries that shouldn't exist, those lines on the map drawn by some civil servant in London. That kind of cooperation creates its own magic.

Eva: Admiring the strength of the culture, that they've managed to keep health at the core, even through the fight and difficulties. Something that seems to be missing in a culture with processes of colonisation that happened way back.

How is the ownership of the land followed through for future generations?

The court results clearly specified that the land rights went directly to the community. The Ogiek have been taking care of the land, regardless of orders or evictions. Now the Ogiek have been writing their wisdom and natural laws as bylaws to be there for the future generations to access.

Are there ways in which the younger generations are being incorporated in the process of recognising, valuing and protecting the collective? How are you working with young people, so that the wins are not lost for the future generations? Are children also involved?

We're already involving the younger generation. The older and the younger generation are moving together. Our cultures learn from the older generation. We hold meetings with the youth, where they are involved with the struggle. All types of knowledge are passed to the youth. Now we've also created a teaching resource, using our language.

The youth are also using a mapping process to connect with the history, the needs, the dreams. The elders help with the mapping process. Women play a key role in sustaining the culture in indigenous communities, they are the ones bringing the young into adulthood. The culture, the knowledge is being transferred from mothers to their own children, in place.

How did people experience the assembly?

It was reassuring and empowering to hear the stories of the different communities, and to realise that much of the struggles and problems are similar.

Heard in the session...

"We Ogiek members are very happy. I feel like we are not the only people who have been pursuing the rightful things. Also any other person who is pursuing justice has also won. It is not a win for us alone. Even for our brothers and sisters who are still pursuing their land tenure rights, we will still pursue the struggle together until we all secure our lands. I think what we are going to do now, we want to say thank you to everyone, but more so we want to continue to have these community meetings as we strengthen each other as we pursue these injustices" Andre Kitelo

"We pray that the other communities get the victory that the Ogiek have got. We pray that one day one time we win" Matunge Emily

"We have always taken care of our land. We have done this using our indigenous knowledge. In this generation we decided to document our bylaws. By using our

bylaws we know we will be able to protect our land even more than we used to because now we have the power that we didn't have before" - Teresa Chemosopt

"A practical example is we are doing our mapping for our advocacy efforts. As a young person who has gone to school I might be able to carry out mapping, but the history of what I am mapping is from the elders who guide us on how to carry out map work. At the end we produce maps which give a clear picture of how we use our land. We are able to compare how we are using our land this year compared to last year" Phoebe

"How strong your culture is, even though you have been in a fight you have managed to keep a strong health at the core of your culture. For those of us who experienced being colonised far back in time it is hard to keep that health. What a good job you've done keeping that in spite of the difficulty" Eva

Resources

East African Assemblies Video from Forest People Program:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sS77zArvZ0o&t=1s>

Session 2: Chile Session



Chile

Where a social uprising led from street assemblies to a Constitutional Assembly whose new hope-filled constitution was rejected in September's 'referendum of disinformation'.

You can watch the recording of this session [here](https://youtu.be/CKViLMC_b4k): https://youtu.be/CKViLMC_b4k

About the music Video

We started our session with Shock, by Ana Tijoux: [Shock - Ana Tijoux \(Official Music Video\)](#). It brings the message of how long the journey has been, and yet how much energy there is. It involves the younger generation. It speaks of the levels of connection between the different perspectives, places, times.

Some responses (invited by Puli) to the video and song from participants...

People sharing in the chat:

- Injustice
- I felt like/wanted to raise a clenched fist! 🦊
- The images were scary and made me think about the legacy of the Pinochet years
- mi corazón tiene grietas que le ayudan a abrirse.
- felt the depth of the struggle/ the sacrifice involved
- Solidarity
- Such a contrast to Eastern Africa.

We were warmly welcomed by Theresa, and by Justin who invited Puli Cabrera from [Democracia Viva](#) in Chile to introduce herself and the session.

Puli invited us to create and be in a space to listen, to see each other and find each other. And named the beauty of we being people from different parts of the world doing very different things in order to bring change.

The last three years have been an intense period for Puli and for Chile in general. Democracia Viva, which arose as a response to the collective need for deep change, aims at creating spaces for people's participation, and was born within the social unrest of October 2019. This current stage of the process is just one of many, of a long history of upheaval, of the struggle and unrest that have been and are a response to the legacy of Pinochet's dictatorship, which includes a constitution written by the military, and a neoliberal, consume-oriented approach to life. Everything is private and geared for profit.

A story about a new, grassroots Constitution

The legacy of Pinochet would not disappear unless we changed our constitution. Everything is privatised. The economic gap is enormous. Things like the sea, the water are owned by a few. The younger generation is taking over like a wave. Sometimes we're unjust with the past.

Before the assemblies, before the movement, we've been listening to the unrest, to the pain of the people, to everything that wasn't working. That underlying current of pain and drive and lack was something that ignited the Estallido Social de Octubre. We saw mobilisation and presence of the people, oppression and violence from the government. The loss of at least 20 people, the loss of eyes from at least 400.

We felt, "This is it, Chile is over".

The remedy of this social effervescence (which was so reminiscent of the dictatorship) was local organising: small spontaneous gatherings where people spoke of what was happening. We remembered ideas of changing our constitution that were there for a long time..

Eventually we reached an agreement to change the constitution through a referendum.

There always was a connection between the street movement and the political structures. The people demanded respect and space for the presence and agency of everyone. We gave ourselves 9 months to develop a new constitution!

The constitution that was created by an assembly that included a wide variety of people—was the dream of a land where health, respect and development were at the centre. A New Chile, which could emerge from the ashes of the Old Chile, that we felt had died.

Small-group inquiry: what would you change in your constitution?

Some thoughts from participants

- Decentralisation.
- Protection of the environment. It should be a right.
- Critical decisions should be created by the people who are affected by them.
- Expand the constitution beyond the borders, to bring it at a planetary level. e.g. the Ecocide Laws.
- The power is in the process rather than in the product.
- Do we want a constitution?
- Laws that may evolve with time.

Reflections from David Lees in Scotland

It's meaningful to be part of a historical trajectory of solidarity between Scotland and Chile. Two countries physically really far apart, united through technology and by purpose.

Struck by the fact that Scotland doesn't have a constitution, but a series of thousand of years old laws that have been passed. Not having a constitution is an interesting mechanism for power, as you can make it up as you go along.

Feeling deep moments of solidarity and gratitude.

Questions and answers from Puli...

Curious about the Chilean neighbourhoods coming together and starting the conversation: how did that start?

Much of them came from exceptional circumstances after so much of the infrastructure was damaged, people walking together, being on the street together, with an open attitude. They emerged, organically, from people coming together.

This possibility of local connection has sadly been destroyed by the pandemic, now we feel more connected with people from Africa or Scotland. The local connections seem to be the first to suffer when we're afraid, when we isolate ourselves. And yet we hope that the seeds are there.

Also curious about the three mentioned preconditions about gender parties, places for indigenous peoples, and space for individuals to stand unaffiliated.

An important lesson has been to bring balance between organisations and independent people, all working for a shared aim. We're aware of the importance of the political and media skills that are needed for this kind of transformation. How do we bring the decision power to those who don't necessarily have a political education, with all the skills that that brings? So that it is not only in the hands of specialists or companies, but shared by ordinary citizens. This is one of the challenges that Democracia Viva is tackling, and one of the projects we are developing at the moment, through the Laboratorio de Innovación Popular, distributing and connecting, sharing information and skills.

Who negotiated those preconditions?

The social movements. Particularly, the feminist movement in Chile is strong and has reached most areas of public policies. This process started long ago. The women's movement has been very strong for some time, one of the strongest on the street. There was a social agreement from the different social groups, a technical group presented a proposal as to how to create the constitution and organise the assembly.

The part of the original peoples includes a restorative process, dealing with the deep and painful debt towards the original peoples and the enormous harm that they have received, and which has been escalating, becoming more violent

This was the first time the different factions were able to sit down and talk about original people under the label of international agreements; political parties were feeling the pressure of the Chilean social movements.

Elisa Loncón of the Mapuche, and first president of the Convención, has been speaking and advocating for this approach and brought from the cosmology and wisdom of the original peoples an intercultural approach to politics, a call to inhabit our decision making with tenderness, to go away from vengeance and revenge, to transform power over into respect.

What was the review process? Why didn't the constitution pass, and what are the next steps?

There are so many answers to this... so many reasons.

It is tempting to say that "people weren't ready for this". But that would be cheating: if we trust direct democracy, we need to take the results at face value.

Part of the failure had to do with our capacities for communication. Part of it had to do with our capacities to build agreements beyond the social movements that aligned with us: the assemblies, the constitution did not represent people outside those movements.

So much of the discourse was fueled by lies from the government—like saying that the right to decent housing would mean that people would lose their houses.

The rest of the process happened within the standing constitution, which meant that any change that had true transformative power was "anti-constitutional", and was rejected by the Tribunal Constitucional.

Although voting is usually voluntary in Chile, it wasn't for this referendum: it was mandatory in order to give the new constitution democratic legitimacy. We

believe that this skewed the result against the constitutional reform, since many people who are rarely involved in political thinking, many people with whom we never spoke, voted for the first time, because they had to.

Another point is the effectiveness of a constitution: how much can one single country change and do while it's immersed in a global system of colonialism? People wonder how a law protecting nature can take effect if we're not interwoven with the rest of the world?

Responses to and reflections about what happened... no support for the constitution by the people.

Having conversations about it, being in spaces where we can share our feelings, the interest of people from all over the world, all that has in itself been a reparative process.

The efforts of the Chilean people to go through a transformation have been acknowledged. This is an invitation to think differently. The failure feels so deep and painful, we feel the impulse to stop and give up. But these conversations bring new perspectives and a connection to our original purpose. They heal some of the wounds.

It is important to acknowledge the whole process, the long process and work that has brought Chile to this moment in history.

Another reflection that has helped us is to take a step back and observe the whole process from a distance. These past couple of years are only part of work and a fight that has been going on for many decades, and beyond Chile. It's just part of it, and it doesn't mean a stop. The long term work is about staying alert, aware and awake, keeping our upright stance, not letting one failure put us down.

It's been a sobering result. It has brought a deep inquiry about how we've connected, who we included and excluded, the magnitude of our convictions. Our deep convictions were very useful to mobilise people, bring them together, bring a mystique, an energy that is needed to change things. But we also need to not assume that our reality is the only truth for everyone else.

How involved were the trade unions in the creation of the constitution?

The trade unions in Chile are relatively weakened. They adhered to the mobilisations, and their main role was to help that happen. They contributed to the constitutional draft with the incorporation of laboral rights ignored by our current constitution.

The trade unions in Chile are also more connected with the extractive economy, and thus resonated less with the constitution draft.

How was the whole process structured and facilitated? What would you do differently?

The internal quorum was two thirds, which meant that no proposal from the right (which had about one third of the assembly's representatives) was included as it didn't have enough votes. This illusion of majority meant that we believed we were truly representing the Chilean people. Although ordinary citizens were part of the assembly, we did not represent at least an important part of the population. We now believe that this contributed to our blind spots within the process.

The time felt short, only nine months. The first three were spent dealing with agreements and agreeing over all procedures, electing subgroups, and developing the structure. This felt rushed, as a consequence of the worsening of the political and social situation.

Nine months were not enough, and at the same time it was difficult to keep such a process going for much longer than that. This was at least partly due to the big discrediting campaign that was there from the start. Also, the workload was enormous, every day from morning until beyond midnight.

Why did we fail?

There are many interpretations. From our perspective there is always the temptation to say people were not ready, not able to understand our wonderful constitution... In a democracy voting is one of the most powerful tools we have. There is something around the ability to create agreements beyond our own interests, to communicate with - to challenge - some representatives in the

convention who did not make their voices heard. We were not representing everyone.. so some voices were not present, that is something to improve. We were in a bit of a limbo because some of our rights were not “constitutional” - ie. free education for all, so all of those were a battle against the right wing

How much change could we affect with a new constitution?

If we don't have guidelines, anything in writing, we are naked, vulnerable
But how much can you dismantle a colonial system as a small country? We need to dismantle colonialism on the global level too. This is a continuation of fights that have been happening for much longer - it is the responsibility of social movements to monitor the changes we are promoting and make sure we don't go back

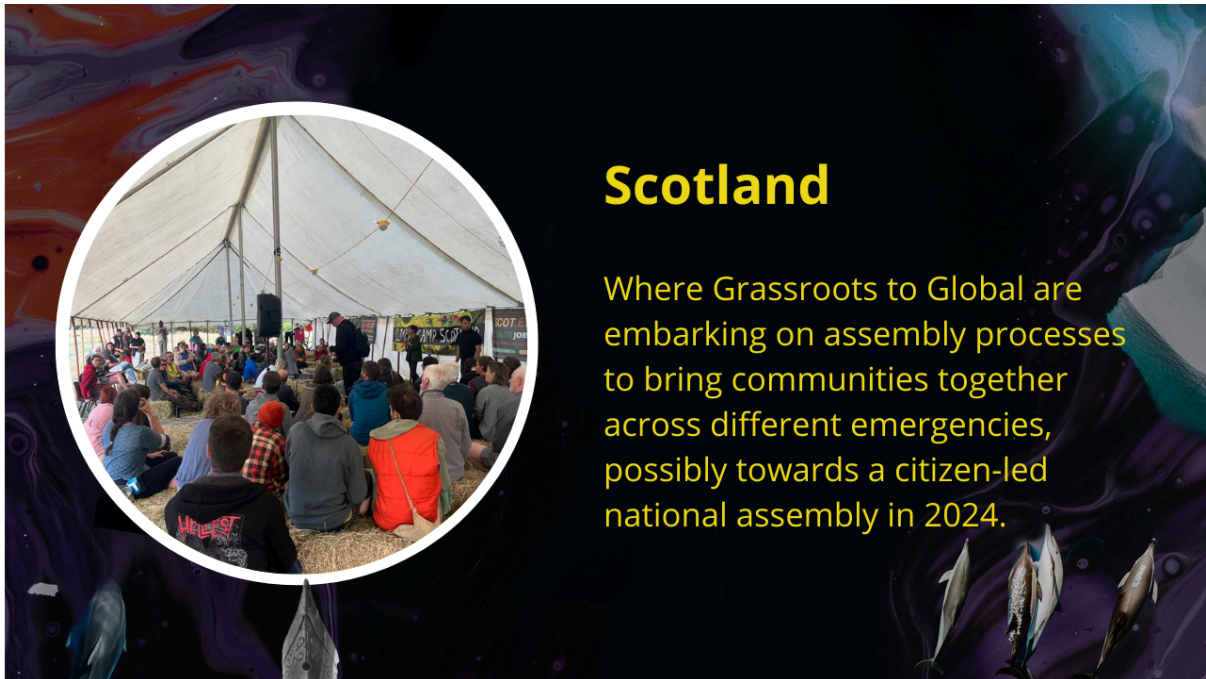
My generation who started this, who thought we have quick answers... Maybe we need to learn to listen better, connect more with different people. We might have never talked to the people who opposed us, or understood their needs. We need to learn to align interests and convene different groups - if we can do that we create a sacred space

Resources

Video about the constitutional process, the Franja Electoral Constituyentes:

[Franja Electoral de Constituyentes 2021 - 1/04/2021](#)

Session 1: Scotland Session



Scotland

Where Grassroots to Global are embarking on assembly processes to bring communities together across different emergencies, possibly towards a citizen-led national assembly in 2024.

You can watch the recording of this session [here](https://youtu.be/QZfblyZl3I):

<https://youtu.be/QZfblyZl3I>

About the music video

The session was spaciouly started with the offering of Enough is Enough, a co-creation between [Karine Polwart](#), [Oi Musica](#) & [The Soundhouse Choir](#). This piece of music was composed with the express purpose of inviting choirs, street bands and community groups to learn and perform it, and join an exciting, collective musical response to the UN Climate Change Conference (COP26) held in Glasgow in November 2021. Full details at <https://letitgrow.scot>

Eva Schonveld gently guided us through our presence, our place, our intention. A soft and powerful way to arrive together. Inviting a pause.

Justin Kenrick: Reflecting on the power of pausing. and how an assembly is also a pause. A pause to think and reflect and ground instead of rushing into action. When we rush into action we often repeat the very thing we're up against.

About the Climate Assembly in Scotland

It began from the call from Extinction Rebellion to: Tell the truth. Act now. Trust ourselves. This wasn't in place of action, but rather ensuring that the government could stay out of it, and instead listen to the people—chosen at random to be representative of the population. It was an experiment in making rational decisions in order to move forward.

In Scotland, we held a symbolic Citizens Assembly was held through occupying the Scottish Parliament (on a Friday, when the chamber is not used), where we discussed proposals on what actions would be useful. Here's a video on that assembly: https://youtu.be/FjFWXD2_Hwk

There was no pushing back, but deliberation. Listening to experts and deliberating. Listening to the demands of the police asking to vacate the chamber, and deliberating—the assembly decided to go a couple of hours later.

What we hoped for was an assembly that would consider the depth of the crisis and the level of transformation needed to meet that crisis. As part of this, and after months of direct action, the Scottish government finally agreed to declare a state of Climate Emergency.

The Scottish Climate Assembly

Similarly, we needed creative direct action to convince the government to allow for a Climate Assembly. In this instance, and perhaps like so often, change came through social movements and direct action, even if it looks like it came from Parliament. Change happens from below and it is resisted, and only sometimes accepted—in a co-opting way—by the government.

The power of not being alone.

Having two XR representatives in the steering committee meant that we could deal with the bullying. And also invites a greater rational space.

We started with a deliberative process, aiming to have people from right across the spectrum of views listening to one another, inviting spaciousness and curiosity. There was a sense of being reasonable, coming from taking off our

masks and letting go of having to have a position representing any groups. That allowed us to listen to each other deeply - we didn't always agree, but if we carried on listening we could arrive at something else.

Out of that process came the question:

How should Scotland change to tackle the climate crisis in a fair and effective way?

Although the agreement had been to have this inquiry in a way that might include considering the possibility of deep transformation, but in spite of a great deal of work to try and keep this intention the sessions of the Assembly moved inexorably towards being about what can be done within the status quo. The two XR representatives left close to the end of the preparation, not wanting to endorse a process that would not even discuss the kind of transformation needed.

What came out of the Assembly?

Some powerful suggestions about technologies to adapt our current infrastructure to ameliorate its impact on the climate. These suggestions were not accepted by the Scottish Government.

What the government accepted were statements about making places better, or things that they were already doing but the assembly members hadn't had a chance to know about.

Although everything was in place, the process didn't work, it did not bring about the proposals that are needed. It felt that the civil servants involved, inevitably being upholders of the status quo, didn't want to or couldn't trouble their masters.

You can't expect the system to plot its own demise, no matter how many requests and demands we make. Direct action brought changes, yes, and to make the level of change that we need we need to be able to enact these processes from the ground up.

We're not seeing assemblies as being something in place of action, we don't see them as talking spaces where one gets diverted to and ignores what needs to

happen, we see assemblies as for us to gather together and decide on action, on very thoughtful and effective action.

How do we assemble in ways that can be emotionally intelligent, where we can deeply listen to each other, where we can make the changes needed.

The ways we've been thinking about this are more grounded, community-based decision making. We can't do things the same way we've always done them and expect different results.

One of the key strands in our work is an understanding around trauma, which is a missing piece in our picture of how we are as human beings in this society. In this culture we did not acknowledge it for a long time. From an awareness of shellshock and PTSD, we've been moving towards a widening acknowledgment of how trauma is actually way more present without the need of direct contact with war or physical violence. Health Systems (NHS in the UK) are working on preventing and treating adverse childhood experiences, ACEs - not just out of goodness, but also due to the financial implications, "saving" money on the physical and psychological consequences later on in life. This is just part of the picture...

Growing up in a system of power-over, we're exposed, from an early age and basically until we die, to a changing yet continuous stream of power-over: from our parents, older children, education system, work, our politicians. We're expected to accept this, under the excuse that "that's just how things are". That is traumatising. All of us have traumatic patterns that impact us, our relationship with others, our sense of agency.

We need to address this in our decision-making processes, because when we're in a reactive state and triggered into trauma, we lose contact with our rationality and our empathy. We need space and time to come back to our regulated, whole self.

It is countercultural to speak about trauma in most areas of our society, especially in politics, where we're expected to be these polished people who know exactly what we're talking about in order to be leaders. In G2G we're trying to build the kinds of processes that can work with power in a way that is not

triggering. We try to avoid having power over as a way to do that. Having clear and deliberative processes that are connecting and slow things down, bringing moments of spaciousness.

Teaching the skills of self-reflectivity: what happens in us when we hear something we strongly disagree with?

Decisions being local and place based, and not centralised.

So little of our power resides in our communities at the moment, and yet that's where we can make rational and sane decisions that are meaningful for the people affected by them. It makes us re-evaluate what's important, what is sustainable.

When we really get into connection with one another, really listening and using our empathy, we can get into a state of flow where we're no longer reacting to one another but opening up a subject and understanding it better. Where we can get new ideas and solutions. Or even just a good next step.

Ishbel about St Fittick's Park in Torry

The traditional industries of fishing and boat building and maintenance were displaced from Torry when oil arrived. So that Shell could build a pipeline, a whole fishing village was bulldozed. From then on, Torry became a sacrifice zone for Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire. Its unwelcome "development" has come hand in hand with a 13-year reduction in life expectancy. The causes may be pollution, poverty.

Torry as a habitat has changed from a wealthy, green space into a place full of waste and pollution of all sorts. It has now one little accessible space left, St Fittick's Community Park. It is associated with a long history, including it being a place of pilgrimage and spiritual solace. Now a sewer has replaced the stream flowing through it. Local people raised funds and worked to restore it. Then the local government also invested public funds to aid in creating what has become a biodiversity hotspot and a place for the community to gather.

Now the Scottish government has approved a local development plan, fueled by the oil and gas industry in Aberdeen, to turn the park into an industrial zone, despite people's objections—which include an open letter from medical doctors warning of the physical and mental health impacts of losing the park. The company in charge, Energy Transition Zones, has been given a huge amount of public money.

"The fight for St Fittick's is a wee local example of the global pattern of how vested interests use the wealth, power, and connections to abuse the poor"

More information on our website <https://saintfittickstorry.com/> and our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/309500630216343/>

Scott Herret - Torry People's Assembly

Read all about it here:

<https://www.grassroots2global.org/thinkinghome/torry-assembly>

Scott's Flow Chart:  Torry_Flow Chart.pdf

Report <https://www.grassroots2global.org/thinkinghome/torry-assembly>

What are the next steps?

We're building from local assemblies towards a national assembly: developing at the national level but totally informed and shaped by local people's experience. Not a gathering of politicians, but people coming from different localities in Scotland to develop a plan, a proposal on how to transform our politics so it's based on deliberation from ordinary people, instead of leaving it to ordinary people dressed as politicians and constrained by that dressing up.

We're in the process of reaching out to people who have an interest in this form of deliberative democracy. And we're having a meeting later this year where we continue exploring how to deliberately and collaboratively set out to change politics in Scotland with a view to creating something that is pro people and pro life, emotionally and psychologically informed, avoiding the traps that our political system has fallen into.

If a people's assembly is successful and makes action happen, who is the assembly accountable to?

In terms of a National People's Assembly, it would not be accountable to anybody; it would simply put out proposals, ideas and suggestions forward to a Citizens Assembly, which (through sortition) is representative of the whole people. If there is a decision through the deliberative process there would be no need for elections.

We can build strength agreeing to disagree.

There are three paths from the local assemblies

1. Stuff that we can do straight away, that we don't need to ask anybody, things that people involved are present and interested.
2. Appeals to existing power structures, such as local or national authority, funders, etc. so that things can get done. This often leads to things getting stuck in bureaucracy and opposition.
3. The path we imagine ourselves: e.g. we imagine that our local assembly can join up with other local assemblies, that communities can join up to the national level: a citizen-led national assembly. Where we step into responsibility and also contest legitimacy.

Reflections from the Circle

In Torry... There's a very large mistrust, built from many instances of being let down, betrayed. Local solutions by local people: coming together as a community—Go Green Café, reducing food waste—gives us the chance to speak, to listen, to make space for the deep trauma in Torry. What to do... go around, local people listening to local people.

We saw the potential and the need for these ideas to spring up all over Scotland and the rest of the world. We can communicate across and show solidarity for each other, share learnings, tell the stories of the other communities so that people who hear them see the commonalities in the issues.

We were interested in the critique of the state and what it's sold to us in the shape of "community planning", where so much resources get invested. Rationality only goes so far, we need connectivity and relationships. We need to make these systems more human, even to achieve the things that they're set up to achieve.

One of the lessons we learned was that it's not enough to get people to come to the assembly, you need preparation, and spaces where people can talk, get to know each other, to know how to talk to each other, how to build trust. The importance of dignity in the process.

Involving children is important, and it brings its own challenges. Trust is an even stronger issue. Report on Scotland's Climate Assembly process and children's participation: <https://www.childrensparliament.org.uk/climate-changemakers/>

Much of the government uses the word "assembly" which has become a new, trendy word for consultation, and their expectation is that the outcome will be a report. During the Climate Assembly, we felt that for many civil servants 'assembly' is a sounding board for policy. This contrasts with the vision of G2G.

What government means by assembly is a narrow exploration of solutions within the running framework. It is time we reclaim the possibility of what assemblies *could* be. And that's about our imagination, about raising our level of ambition about what this process could be like. Seeing a potential connection with the One Planet Development in Wales, a really interesting path of exploration.

Torry's assembly brings something very important, which is focussing on the land, strengthening our communities. The conviviality of coming together for communal work and allowing the space to be with our vulnerabilities and our trauma.

When, as humanity, we learn to put ourselves in service to the planet and recognise that we're part of the land, that shift in direction will enable conversations across traditionally opposing views. This may bring us the vitality

to ensure that there's a way to ensure our work of restoration, whichever path we take.

David Younger, shared his interest in building up from the 1129 established Community Councils together with Brian Allen, to evolve a system with the potential to do what's been discussed here. The community councils have been set by the local authorities in the area, as a consulting process. Our view is to use the councils as a starting point into which assemblies can feed, and they can be connected to the councils and each other. And the councils can also be connected with each other. The assemblies can then decide and feed their decisions into the councils, and together elect representatives to bring their points to the relevant authorities. We're determined not to tell people that we have a perfect answer. This is an experiment. If you're interested, please email dyounger@rocketmail.com

There's been some fantastic stuff from community councils and community planning. And there are several issues, such as many petty discussions, a lack of continuity in the good work. For instance an Ecocity involving the Children's Parliament about 20 years ago, where mind-blowing ideas and plans were put forward by children. Nothing has happened on the back of that. We don't have the spaces where these things can be taken forward.

Pointing out the dangers of enmeshing different processes under one process using community spaces and assets. If they fail, the community assets will go back into the proceeds of capital gain. Instead, communities need spaces to meet and talk informally, so that they can build trust and relationship.

Broadening the idea of what a community is. People coming together with a common aim. One such aim is finding out the truth about what's happening around the climate emergency. Coming together to revise the education curricula. Anyone who is interested and willing to be part of that community please contact Roland: roland@glenkensbb.co.uk

What is the potential in using existing structures? Community councils seem a great opportunity to connect people through place, and also use the structures to put pressure on the authorities.

Resources

Sophia Georgescu-Children's Parliament: A form of practice that was built upon healthy relationship building and the engagement of children is Scotland's

Climate Assembly process and children's participation:

<https://www.childrensparliament.org.uk/climate-changemakers/>

Link to information on the history of Indonesia:

<https://www.instagram.com/p/CjII31AD8wv/>

Mary MacCallum Sullivan: Alastair McIntosh has proposed the need for 'cultural psychotherapy'. His idea is profoundly connected with our connection with land; and lots of people are doing little bits of work around that. More, of course, needed...

Joseph Rathinam: We have established 398,000 Neighbourhood Parliaments in India. If anyone is interested to know more about Neighborocracy Please kindly contact at: rathnamjoseph@gmail.com. We also have started the same in Europe under the name of SONEC, sociocratic neighbourhood circles.

Gratitudes

We're incredibly grateful to the groups from Chile and East Africa who contributed to this Reworlding event, and particularity to Puli and Theresa who put so much time and effort into making their sessions so interesting and useful!

We're also very grateful to GlobaTradu for the Interpretation. One day we hope that anyone attending these events will be able to contribute and listen in their mother tongue.

Get in touch

Grassroots to Global is a small, Scottish based organisation, working to bring about real systemic change starting by creating democratic spaces for all kinds of people to learn, listen, use their imaginations, connect experiences and issues and rebuild trust in ourselves and each other.

You can get in touch via our [website](#) or by email: engagedlistening@gmail.com. You can sign up for our very occasional e-news and announcements right at the bottom of our homepage [here](#). Look out for the confirmation email - if you don't get it, check your spam folder and mark it is 'not spam' or they'll all end up in there!

