SHARING EXPERIENCES,

REFLECTIONS,

LEARNINGS,

UNLEARNINGS,

PERSPECTIVES,

INSIGHTS...

Welcome

We want to put together a little newsletter/booklet with reflections of the gathering. We were hoping you could write 7-10 sentences about what was powerful for you, what touched you in the gathering, specific highlights, what new possibilities, unlearnings and insights opened up for you? How is the alliance evolving?

Photo Album for the Gathering:
https://photos.app.goo.gl/NCULxaEcxatXMMPNA
https://photos.app.goo.gl/NeacfMHxF6p6UGVKA

"This was my first gathering with the Ecoverse. I may have had an idea of what the gathering would be like or had some sort of expectation... but oh boy i got more than i bargained for, it went so deep... my mind, body and soul. I kept mentioning just how the universe had gathered all my people in one room and make this whole gathering about me, it felt like this was tailor made just for me, I have not had a connection so pure and deep with myself in a while, if ever. I am motivated, alive, restored, inspired, I am cleansed, connected and loved, the trust and love of self is on the other levels. It's still so hard to explain to people who were not at the Gathering just how and what went in, I am feeling like a whole new being ,ready to carry the spirit of the Ecoverse with me at every step. This sort of experience only happens once in a green moon in one's life and it sure is going into my book. I am filled with gratitude and I cannot wait to one day sponsor someone to receive this sort of love that is boundless, unconditional and pure. It was magical in every single way.

I was mostly captivated by song and dance. The Indigenous language from the San and Khoe people, I didn't understand it physically but I felt the goosebumps with every click of the tongue. I had a water ceremony which was the highlight of the entire gathering. I was surrounded by Power in The Mother form, I was not planning a story of such Magnitude, truly a blessing to have experienced this.

I also had a chance to share my gift as a chef and healer in the kitchen as part of the South African and Indian cooking nights; it was love surpassing all understanding for me.

Connecting with like souls, related souls across the oceans, it only affirmed and confirmed that we're real, what we feel, is real, the spirit world is very real…"

- Nonhlanhla Godole, Millet-versity, Johannesburg, South Africa

“I was encouraged to attend Ecoversities Conference because it addressed the issue of unlearning and reconnecting our sense of spirituality.

During the conference sessions, I felt that people were saying exactly what I had been speaking and thinking about for so many years. I stopped my PhD studies because I started wondering why I was seeking an accolade from the very institutions that made me feel a lesser and worthless being. During our Micro-Gathering, Manish spoke about this. The nature of the Ecoversities conference made me feel valued, respected and people actually found me interesting. I felt no reason to disbelieve them and my inner critic was silent 😊.

The sessions felt like group therapy sessions, supportive and uplifting. I felt a strong sense of commune, mutual respect and love in which I was able to share my experience of growing up and feeling ashamed of myself and my African Indigenous heritage.

My ancestors were highly honoured in the Sunrise Ceremonies, the Water Ceremony and the gathering of culinary plants in the area. Needless to say, I shared copious amounts of tears of joy, recognition and some for pain.”

- Priscilla de Wet, Indigenous Scholar, Capetown, South Africa

"The Ecovesity gathering was an ahaaaaa moment. It made me realise who I'm from body, mind and spirit . I was able to appreciate who I'm as an African and to have a deeper meaning of who are we as African and to realise that the time is now for us to answer all the questions that we have as l realise that whatever the question that l / we have we have the answers . I appreciated the simplicity of allowing the process to lead us and allowing ourselves to human being. I have witnessed humanity through dancing, love, joy and kindness from kids to elders. The alliance is playing a pivot role in allowing human to practice humanity through allowing ancient practice , through allowing kids to explore themselves and youths to be who they are it was such a profound process and to me l felt i was practicing life. Asate Sana

So what was interesting for me was remembering and honouring our African Ancestral rituals which was for me powerful and a moment of unlearning and allowing our Ancestors to be in this journey with us. The alliance evolving and creativity of allowing open spaces in order to go deeper listening to stories which is our of our profound traditional indigenous method of learning.

Being in a Chaotic journey of learning with have representatives to share their stories not of their learning but living experience and practice humanity .

The process of having intergenerational in learning together living no one behind this is the journey that we need to nature so that we unlearn together with our future generation."- **Admire Yemurai Gwatidzo, Kufunda Learning Village, Kufunda**

"The Planetary Gathering was an expansive moment, and a place on the wounded soil of what is currently known as Cape Town, where folks from across the earth converged to try and practice the possibilities for how learning and life might dance to many rhythms.

I experienced it as a whole-body immersion of honouring, messiness, opening, pain, healing, questioning. We centred ritual and food and fire to guide our sharing. It was a challenging space to be in; also a very welcoming one, across the generations.

I came away with no a sense of a neat ending or any answers at all. I carried with me a sense of connectedness, more inner entanglement, deep gratitude and renewed intention to meeting life and learning as daily practice." - **Bridget Steffen, Muizenburg Learning Village**

Obligation

Visolela with visions and visionaries from Namibia
Manish and merry band - India
Yeyo and others Mexico
A gorgeous multi-generational group from Brazil
Ana who sings with the baby clinging to her like a banana peel
The list goes on and on and on
Many old and new friends
Most transcendent indigenous drummers
flung me through multiverses
intertwined like curly hair
where I meandered without helmet seatbelt checkedluggage
arms dancing silk ribbons in a breeze
eyelids faithfully shut
enormous ovoids glowing on upturned palms
miniscule me merged with all of creation
Maitreya whispered in my ear to the beat of the drums and feetfall on floor
“I am the light
The light is me
I am expanding”

My mad mama with her visions voices angels’ offerings,
“patience is a virtue”

Finally
imminent dawn
of compassion
and justice

And i
at last
can be
eternally
Free

Bernedette Muthien, Capetown

“The gathering was a medley of many experiences and affirmations wrapped in one. It was a flow of storytelling, reality checks, reawakening and connections. Spiritual and physical.

The location added to the beauty of the learnings albeit with painful reminders of historical fences.

I was touched by the water ritual, Edgard's reminder about "for every question, community is the answer", the challenge facing indigenous people and the Noara people in particular, Mme Visolela and Q's ritual dance and chant, attending the Friday Muslim prayer with Aasif, breathworks session with Sami, the affirmation circles at the end of the gathering, the gifts of wrist bands and the many story tellings.

My biggest take away are the possibilities to co-recreate collaborations with local and translocal ecoversity initiatives. Overall, the gathering was magical and rejuvenating.

Blessed regards” - **Mabule Mokhine, Greenhouse Project, Johannesburg, South Africa**

“I entered the Ecoversities Alliance Planetary Gathering excited by the prospect of meeting and building relationships with people from different parts of the world with a shared desire to re-imagine our ways of learning and being. I came to appreciate the value of being with people who spoke the same language of co-creation and were thus rooted in deep, shared intentionalities. I was touched by the ways in which this community held space for one another; by the tenderness, warmth, generosity, and openness that everyone embodied.

I really appreciated the space that we were afforded to make offerings from the different faith traditions which we brought to the gathering. Not only did this allow us to relate the themes of our learning to the traditions that have enriched our lives, but it also created opportunities for us to learn from others about traditions to which we may not have been exposed otherwise. This openness to sharing and the respect shown towards Indigenous practices stood out as being quite distinct from secular humanist modes of learning that may negate or relegate such practices to the margins of the learning experience.

Between cooking together, listening to the stories of youth and elders alike, and visiting sites in and around Cape Town in which Ecoversities principles were being applied, there were many highlights that stood out from the experience. One of the most significant unlearnings that I experienced was to surrender the desire for pedagogical control, and to embrace the prospect of shared learning rooted in gift culture; to recognize that pedagogy extends to our ways of holding space for one another and for the histories, cultures, and narratives that we bring to every learning encounter. I'm excited to continue weaving alongside the new friends we made through this gathering, InshaAllah.”

- **Aasif Bulbulia, Women of Waqf Futurist Collective, Capetown, South Africa**

"I arrived in Cape Town with wounds in my feet and thorns in my heart. But soon, with joyful chants and magical dances, thorns started to come out and my feet continued to heal with the careful indigenous medicine people offered me from their territories.

The sense of unrootness which I have been experimenting for so long got unmasked with the powerful and ancient energy of the mountains and the sea and the fact that I was walking in the motherland. Plus getting to deeply know Q7, an indigenous african healer, surprised me with the amazing synchronisation that we both are studying the healing energy of the plants and its sacred geometry. This encounter is still nurturing my perspective as an apprentice of healing and enriches my labour with youth.

My first global gathering and first trip in 10 years since I became a mother had catalysed a deep understanding of myself as a racial mixed person with thirst of decolonization, as a south american with a deep connection with all southern cultures longing for ancestral spiritual roots and of a woman dancing with natural cycles and healing art along with a precious constellation which is ecoversities that is nursery of seeds of hope, focus and evolution of self and collective paths."
- Karina Rodríguez, Mushuk Away, Ecuador

I arrived from the Mountain Kingdom of Lesotho on a rainy Saturday afternoon. I was welcomed by helpful affable souls which I will later know as my Brothers and Sisters. Ecoversities Gathering in Cape Town, South Africa 2023 was nothing I had experienced. The love, the music, the laughter, the food, joyful, painful, journeys of different individuals from every corner of the World. My offering was just me being there and I managed to break the awkwardness of the first meeting with songs and trash bins. "**Sing**, **Sing**, **Oh! Afrika…"** Words will fail me to mention my gratitude to all of you. Your love, your gifts and your knowledge. I am not alone and I have so much to offer this beautiful family in the coming near future. Namaste! Thank You! Dankie! Gracious! Kea Leboha! One Love!!!

- **Tholang Tseka**-Basotho Biodiversity Organization, **Lesotho**

A door just opened.
For most of the people in this world, travelling abroad is an almost impossible experience, and yet, there are so many of us finding ways to make our lives a constant journey. As we know, travelling is not about money, it is about what we believe we are capable of achieving. Once we are on the road, life will definitely provide us all what is needed.

We must remember, that this certainty of the uncertain is almost impossible to achieve without the help of others. Thanks to the Ecoversities family I've recovered my strength, and now I can re-start sharing it with my people in my own context. The whole world now seems smaller, with a new relative in each country, it is a huge blessing to unlearn who and where my family is.

Harvesting our dinner from the landscape that surrounded us, hearing the voices of so many elders and childs in diverse languages but vibrating in the same waves of love and recognition, singing and dancing every single day that we shared together, was for me a new way of communicating with my body and with the others. Observing so many attractive bodies, so different from each other, made me fall in love with every single skin tone, hairstyle and human proportion. Constantly getting gifts, hugs, love, words and care from almost 100 people from all around the world made me feel happy, abundant, full of true knowledge and tools to help others. I feel like just by having a healthy community we empower ourselves to achieve anything we dream of. An extended family is the best way to learn each day, every single moment, to co-create a living university.

I feel the most grateful for being part of a community that has nature and freedom as teachers. My landscape is now wider and my wish to unleash/unlearn has never been bigger.

Now, let's keep on the work so we can always find ways to keep this door for all, wide open.

Tlazolteotl Tzatzoehetzin, Casa Matla, Architectural Agroecology Studio, México.

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