Session 3 - Thriving Place (Local–Ecological lens)

May 03: Co-Creative Working Document

Introduction

Welcome to the third session of the Doughnut Economics Action Lab's (first) co-creative process to adapt the 'City Portrait' methodology so that it is relevant and useful to global South priorities and interests. You can find a repository of all the materials related to this co-creative process at https://doughnuteconomics.org/cocreating-global-south-portrait

The purpose of this co-creative working document is to provide an overview of **Session 3: Thriving Place (Local–Ecological lens)**, and to provide a space for participants to provide inputs and share resources, suggestions, comments, questions, or anything else related to this session.

The aim of this session is broadly for contributors to consider how to answer the question "how can this place thrive within its natural habitat?" in a global South context. At its core, the Local–Ecological lens asks what Nature would (and wouldn't) do *here* to create conditions conducive to life, and challenges our cities and places to meet or exceed the generosity of ecosystem services produced by native ecosystems.

This approach is based on the principles of biomimicry, which comes with methodological challenges surrounding:

1. **Targets** - how to explore what Nature would do here? What wouldn't it do here? Why or why not?
2. **Dimensions** - we at DEAL, together with Biomimicry 3.8, selected 7 ecosystem services to illustrate how global North cities can aim to be as generous as the healthy ecosystem next door – do these make sense to your context and place? What else?
3. **Indicators & Data** - ideal indicators would measure the city's contribution to the 7 ecosystem services. There are likely huge gaps in local data – can global / satellite data help? Or crowdsourced data collection (i.e. citizen science)? What else?
4. **Social Interconnections** - what are the interconnections between thriving people and thriving place? (e.g. green spaces linked to better health and education outcomes – what else?)

In preparation for the session, we invite you to:

- review pages 16-21 of the Creating City Portraits methodological guide
- watch the 13-minute section from 10:25 to 23:20 of this excellent keynote by biomimicry expert Janine Benyus (or the whole 1-hour talk, if you have time!)
- read this short Ultimate Guide to Genius of Place with useful steps for getting started and easy access to a variety of examples.
- ensure that you have the Zoom link in your calendar (and if not, please email andrew@doughnuteconomics.org)

Agenda

Start	End	Description
12:00	12:15	Welcome & Recap
12:15	12:30	How can this place thrive within its natural habitat? Introducing the Local–Ecological lens
12:30	13:15	Breakout session: in smaller groups, each contributor reflects on 2 of the core questions on targets, dimensions, indicators & data, and social interconnections
13:15	13:40	Reporting back to the group
13:40	13:55	Open discussion and reflections
13:55	14:00	Next steps

Contributors' reflections: how can all the people of this place thrive?

This is a space for contributors to reflect and contribute ideas to the questions surrounding how to answer the question "how can this place thrive within its natural habitat?" in a global South context before, during, or after the session itself.

1. TARGETS and the Local–Ecological Lens

The concept of Ecological Performance Standards challenges cities and places to meet or exceed the generosity of ecosystem services provided by the wildland next door. The framework created with cities in the global North gathered targets and indicators from publicly available sources using a desk-based approach. The desk-based methods we used to create these first Portraits thus did not go out and measure the generosity of the healthy ecosystem next door -- are there particular issues or methods that you would suggest to include local ecological knowledge, especially those of marginalised people and communities?

Name	Reflections on Targets

2. DIMENSIONS of the Local-Ecological Lens.

The framework created with cities in the global North included the following 7 local ecological dimensions:

Air quality regulation - Leaves can capture ultrafine air pollutant particles and are also able to absorb gaseous pollutants.

Temperature regulation - Forests regulate rainfall and cool local air temperature through a process of evapotranspiration.

Energy harvesting - Through photosynthesis, plants turn sunlight into energy.

Biodiversity support - Forests provide protective locations for nests/dens, as well as structures to support plant growth.

Erosion protection - Marine plants and mollusks, such as oysters, slow down waves and reduce their power to erode the shore.

Carbon sequestration - Land-based and sea-based plants absorb and store CO2, as do phytoplankton in the ocean.

Water provisioning - Coastal dunes purify water as it infiltrates through the sand.

Are there other or different ecosystem services that should be taken into account in global South contexts?

Name	**Reflections**

3. INDICATORS & DATA for Local-Ecological Outcomes

In creating Portraits in global North cities, time and resources were not available for on-site data collection to create new metrics, so the city's existing ecological targets were taken as a first proxy for setting ecological performance ambition. In global South contexts where such targets exist, should they be used? In addition, city- or district-level data are likely to be scarce, or not up-to-date. What options and alternative ways of choosing indicators and gathering data are possible?

Name	Reflections
AF	Ideal indicators would measure the city's contribution to ecosystem services relative to the native ecosystem in their units per hectare (e.g. m^3/ha groundwater stored after a storm, C / ha sequestered, #species / ha biodiversity housed – what else?) - In practice, there is an open-source Ecosystem Services Item and Inventory (ESII) app software for on-site ecosystem service data collection. If there are no local data, and no capacity to collect it, what global data sources and satellite data may help fill in the gaps? (e.g. Google Earth Timelapse, global forest change data – what else?) If there are no relevant data, then what alternative methods could be used to evaluate the city's contribution to the ecosystem within which it's embedded? (e.g. compare city targets to ecosystem service provision/regulation, photos, interviews with residents, "citizen science" apps – any examples?)

4. SOCIAL INTERCONNECTIONS with Local-Ecological Performance

What are the social implications of local ecological performance? Can you share examples based on your experience and context that illustrate the interconnectedness of social and ecological issues in your place?

Name	Reflections
Contributor	As requested, the examples referenced in the session for urban farming potentially at scale here in Malaysia: 1) https://sunwayxfarms.com/ourstory/ 2) https://cultiveat.co/our-story/ And this fascinating video from Japan: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KIEOuKD9KX8

Any other issues arising...

This is a space for participants to suggest resources and ideas, raise questions and comments, or provide other inputs before, during, and after this session. Feel free to include links to online materials, or suggestions and ideas for subsequent sessions, or comments on the overall process more generally. We at DEAL are grateful for these inputs - we will review them all with careful consideration.

Name	Resources, Ideas, and Questions