

DISCOVERING NEW STORIES:  
AN ORGANIC INQUIRY INTO *ENSPIRITED* LEADERSHIP

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the possibility of the emergence of a new spirit and practice of leadership in the world and seeks to make some of the principles, values, practices, and assumptions that ground those practicing this leadership more visible.

The methodology used for the thesis is Organic Inquiry and the subjects, or “co-researchers” as they are called in Organic Inquiry, are young women and men who have stepped forward to create six local learning leadership centres in Zimbabwe, Senegal, Croatia, India, Holland and the United Kingdom.

Data were collected through a series of meetings in which stories were gathered from the seven founders of these six learning centres. Stories from six were collected in person, and from one by telephone. The researcher and co-researchers have been in relationship with each other for more than two years.

After transcribing the stories, the researcher engaged in numerous other conversations and e-mail exchanges with the co-researchers in order to discern patterns and themes. The

literature review was used to further illuminate the patterns and themes.

These leaders live and work from a sense of calling, and do so in the company of others. While they work separately, they do not work alone. They have had multi-cultural and other personal experiences which appear to have helped them develop an expanded consciousness. They work from a spiritual center and have learned to embrace uncertainty and ambiguity. They are conscious of core assumptions which are embedded in their work and continually uncover and reflect on those assumptions.

These leaders may be part of an as yet un-named global social movement, locally rooted, which is *enspirited* – coming from a deep sense of being called, *appreciative* – looking for opportunities and assets to build from, and *emergent* – with outcomes that grow naturally from the work rather than being established in advance. While their work is local and they believe that local work, networked globally, creates the possibility for transformation.

This thesis is itself a story of possibility and a story of faith.

## DEDICATION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation is dedicated to Robert Theobald, 1929-1999, a man of boundless curiosity and passion who was my close friend and colleague for 30 years.

It is also dedicated to the dozens of young leaders from around the world whom I have been privileged to meet and work with these past years. I am honored to be on this journey of discovery with them and others we will meet in this journey to look for new ways to live balanced lives on this precious planet.

I gratefully acknowledge my many colleagues at The Berkana Institute, especially Margaret Wheatley, for their time and commitment to developing life-affirming leadership in the world.

And I thank both my daughter, Anne Lucy Stilger Virnig, for loaning me to this Ph.D. Program for 8 years – half of her life – and my spouse, Susan P. Virnig. Susan and I share many of the concerns, values and perspectives I have expressed in this dissertation. When we were in our 20s, Susan co-founded Northwest Regional Facilitators with me. Our lives in our 20s and 30s were similar in many ways to the pioneers in this dissertation. Susan and I have had many conversations about the ideas in this thesis and she has also provided editorial assistance.

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## PREFACE – HOW DOES THIS STORY BEGIN?

Like any good story, this one began a long time ago.

The story itself is about seven people in different parts of the world who have been leading the way. It is the story of young pioneers who have had the courage, intuition, intention and support to begin and to continue their journeys as leaders, creating new social ventures which invite others to explore their own callings. It is the story of a form of social action which appears to differ from the social movements I participated in during the last half of the 20th century. These young leaders, my co-researchers, are introduced in chapter 1.

I became part of this story in the summer of 2001 when I sat in a circle with people from around the world under the trees outside the walls of an ancient castle in Slovenia. Two years later I returned to a Slovenian hillside near the castle to begin writing this thesis.

Almost 35 years earlier, when the Vietnam War was at full escalation and the Civil Rights movement had entered the mainstream of American culture and the environmental movement was just beginning, in 1967 I started my undergraduate education at Carleton College. I thought I was destined to become a bio-

physicist developing new technology for use with the brain and nervous system. After all, I had worked since I was 10 years old in the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry helping people learn about science. By my sophomore year in college I realized that my real interest was in people, not science. Many years later I discovered that my early fascination with how the brain and nervous system worked was really a deep interest in consciousness.

By the time college had ended and I was out in the world, I had been part of several social movements. I had been very active in the anti-war movement and peripherally involved in the civil-rights movements and the fledging environmental movement. I had left the United States after the military invaded Cambodia and the National Guard murdered 4 students at Kent State. I went to Japan where the experience of living and studying in another culture helped me begin to discover more of who I was.

For some 30 years now, I have thought of myself as a social change agent. I graduated from Carleton College in 1971 with a degree in Social Change. Since then I have been devoted to learning my way into serving as both explorer and guide, working towards a world that is life-affirming, where social justice prevails and ecological balance is just natural.

During these years it has been my deep privilege to know and work with many leaders who have shared these concerns. In 1974, when I was 25 years old, I served as Program Director for the EXPO '74 Environmental Symposium Series, held in the town that would become my home – Spokane, Washington, Columbia River Bioregion, Planet Earth. We brought insightful leaders like Willis Harman, Wendell Berry, Stephanie Mills, Robert Greenleaf, Sir Geoffery Vickers, Robert Theobald, Thomas Banyaca, David Brower and others together to talk about the state of the world.

For the last quarter of the 20th century one of my closest friends and colleagues was Robert Theobald, the British-born, maverick socioeconomist and futurist who devoted his life to helping people envision alternative futures. I was honored to be with him when he died in November of 1999. My dissertation is dedicated to the life and work we shared together.

In late 1974, after the close of EXPO '74, I and a small band of others who were the all in our mid-twenties – the same age range as the young leaders who are my co-researchers – founded Northwest Regional Facilitators. NRF is a nonprofit community development corporation founded to work with Spokane, Washington and other Northwest communities to help people envision the future they wanted and work collaboratively to create

it. I served as NRF's Executive Director until early 2000 when I left to establish another nonprofit corporation, New Stories, and became a leader of an existing nonprofit, The Berkana Institute.

Over the years, as its staff grew to more than 50, NRF was one of the early social-entrepreneurs. We engaged in a wide variety of community activities including neighborhood organizing, community participation, and public policy analysis and development, with emphasis on growth management, affordable housing and work/family issues.

While we did not use this language in those days, I would say that the underlying philosophy of NRF was that in order to do anything important, and to do it well, the involved parties needed to come together and talk about it – and listen for the direction that wanted to emerge. These were new ideas at the time. We didn't claim to be expert – at anything. We said that we were there to help people learn how to work with each other in creative, imaginative, caring ways. Instinctively I knew that the work I felt called to do could not be done in government or business or academia or large nonprofit organizations. It needed to be based on listening rather than power and bureaucratic hierarchy. We didn't need to know the answers in advance; we needed to listen for them.

In starting NRF we had critical support from various leaders in the Spokane community and we had a core team of people in their 20s and 30s. We had some relationships with other small startups in our part of the United States, but mostly we were on our own, isolated from others with similar energy and interest in other parts of the country and the world.

As I think of the stories of the new pioneers around the world I have come to love in these past three years, I am aware of key things we who started NRF were not:

Global. While some of us had spent time in other cultures, the work we were doing was decidedly local. Sometimes our work would stretch to the Northwest Region, or North America, but the notion of global impact was not part of our vision.

Spiritual. A Roman Catholic nun on her way out of the church was part of our merry band but, by and large, spirituality was a separate domain. We did not connect spirituality directly with our work.

Appreciative. Our work was to identify and solve problems. Certainly, community participation was a core method, but our work looked for problems and deficits. We came up with ways to fix them.



Deeply Connected. While we actively “networked” at a variety of levels, we were always networking someone else, not ourselves. We were the conveners, the organizers and there was a clear boundary between us and those we organized.

Uncertain. For the most part, we knew what needed to be done. We had strategies. We employed particular methods and tactics. We used participation and collaboration to engage citizens in looking at community problems, occasionally stepping further back into the field of vision.

As I moved into relationships with young pioneers who were discovering how to live their lives and do their work in these times, my heart would begin to tremble as I recalled my life in my twenties. I saw some similarities to my own experience, but I sensed that something different was present that ought to be made more visible.

In this dissertation I will

1. Share the stories of the seven people I have asked to join me in this inquiry. Who are they? What are their values and orientation? What has led them to this time in their lives?

2. Look at their work, the centres for learning to which they have given birth.
3. Surface the themes which emerge when looking at how each has been called into the work they currently offer in the world. These themes begin to suggest a pattern and flavor of leadership which may be essential in these times.
4. Search for a meta-story. This inquiry is more than the wonderful stories of these seven people. It is a meta-story of change being born in the world. Is there a new theory of how change happens? Perhaps. At the very least there is some guidance here, an affirmation for others who would journey into the future in the company of these and other pioneers of change.

## CHAPTER ONE – WHY I HAVE SEARCHED FOR THIS STORY: INTRODUCING AND FRAMING THE INQUIRY

### My Concerns About The Way We Are Living on This Precious Planet

More and more initiatives are springing up around the world and in the United States that bring together people who want to live more balanced lives based on honoring rather than exploiting other people, other species, and the resources of our planet.

The times have changed dramatically since I began my work as a social change agent in the seventies. It is no longer just the social activists who are concerned about frequent ecological breakdowns, greater social stress, increased vulnerability to terrorism, and technological or economic breakdowns. These are topics of concern to the general public.

A constant theme in Robert Theobald's work was that our exploitation of global natural resources is hurling us towards various ecological imbalances which may have devastating consequences. (Theobald, 1972b, 1992, 1997) Over the past several decades, growing numbers of people have come to share this concern, including a wide range of authors who have influenced my thinking. (Abdullah, 1999; Glendinning, 1999; LaChapelle, 1999; Laszlo, 1996, 2001; Macy & Brown, 1998;

Metzner, 1999; Mills, 1989; Thompson, 1996). While each of these authors choose slightly different points of emphasis, each offers a compelling critique which suggests it is imperative that we learn to live more lightly on the planet. The thinking of these authors seems to come from worldviews which are very compatible with mine. Neither they, nor I, would suggest, for example, that it is very likely that new technologies will be developed that will substantially decrease the likelihood of large scale ecological breakdowns.

It is not my purpose in this thesis to give a chronicle of ecological calamity. But it is noteworthy that each of my co-researchers takes it as given that a variety of human actions are destabilizing local and global eco-systems. Most were not born, and one was just a baby when the first Earth Day protests were organized in the United States in 1970. Throughout their lives, the number of people voicing concern about misuse and destruction of the ecosystem has steadily grown.

Several references are illustrative of a wide body of literature addressing these issues.

The Worldwatch Institute's most recent State of the World Report (2003) provides documentation of areas desperately needing our attention. The most recent report cites substantial concerns in

a number of areas -- gaps between rich and poor, groundwater pollution, hunger, loss of amphibians, dependency on fossil fuels, breakdown of transportation infrastructures, international debt crises and international environmental crimes as areas of grave concern.

The Institute (2003) points out that biologists and conservation practitioners now believe that the combination of increased density, growth and migration of human populations and persistent escalation of resource consumption are the major causes of loss of the biodiversity so critical to ecological survival. (p. 41) It now appears that we are in a bit of a horse race to see whether water shortages or oil shortages will be the first to trigger major resource crises. In terms of oil, Richard Heinberg (2003), reports that the Chief Executive Officer of Exxon-Mobil claims that less than half the oil needed to meet demand by 2010 can be supplied by present fields, and that as much as a trillion dollars would be needed to secure it. Water supplies are also under comparable pressure. The number of people living in water-stressed countries is projected to climb from 470 million to 3 billion by 2025. [Worldwatch-Institute, 1999, July 17]

Another look at trends in ecosystem destabilization comes from Thom Hartman who has brought various research together to

show that it takes only a small amount of global warming to trigger a change in ocean currents that could, in the period of several years, bring about another ice age. (Hartman, 2004, January 30)

Data from many sources suggest that we cannot continue to do whatever we want to the ecosystem with more or less complete disregard for the consequences. Some people continue to argue that we will find a way to solve whatever problems may occur as a result of our conspicuous consumption of resources. I remain unconvinced.

Moving from this sort of structural analysis of ecological devastation, I want to consider it briefly from a mythic view which includes impact on consciousness, an issue touched on later in this thesis. Chris Bache (2000) cites both some of the typical hard science (Meadows & Meadows, 1974) and some of the softer (Elgin, 1993) to point to the dire consequences of our continued disregard for eco-system limits.

Like other writers, Bache suggests that if we are not headed for a collapse, we are at the very least headed for a near collapse. What he adds is that this collapse could be likened, in many ways, to a near-death experience. He sees this species-wide near-death experience as almost a necessary precursor to any widespread shift of consciousness. (p. 237)

What will happen, Bache (2000) believes, is that life as we know it will continue to fall apart. As this happens, people's deepest assumptions about their lives, standards of success, obligations the society has towards them and other markers of meaning in life will become increasingly irrelevant. Bache, who spent many years doing shamanic journeying work as an academic, kept rigorous journals of his experience. He relates the following scenario from one of his vision journeys.

For a time, it looked as though we would all be killed, but just then, when the storm was at its peak, the worst of the storm passed over and the danger slowly subsided. Though many had died, still many were alive. As the survivors began to find each other, new social units began to form. Parents and children from different families joined to form new types of families. Everywhere new social institutions sprang into being that reflected our new reality – new ways of thinking, new values that we had discovered in ourselves during the crisis. (pp. 247-248)

This image is a haunting one. At a deep level, at a soul level, at the place they find the energy of their spirit, many of the young leaders with whom I have worked in this inquiry believe we are in the middle of Bache's storm. I share that belief. One way to speak of the storm is to think of it as the result of the damage we have been doing to the global ecosystem. Much of this damage has been done to achieve material progress through consumption of more

and more goods and services. Such material progress has been seen by many in the so-called developed countries as a gauge for improved quality of life. More and more people are questioning whether that is so.

I suspect that the worst of Bache's storm will not pass until people on this planet move beyond the belief that material progress is synonymous with quality of life. Many conversations I have had with my co-researchers have examined assumptions as well as aspirations about quality of life.

My standard of living and that of my co-researchers varies from person to person. Personal preferences, country of residence, availability of resources all play into these differences. However we all have rejected acquisition of material goods as a sign of personal success and we all have expressed strong concerns about the impact consumption has on the eco-system. There are two related issues here:

First, more people in the United States and other "developed" countries are beginning to question the old story of economic progress as the main pathway to higher quality of life. They are questioning the assumption that quality of life is based on the acquisition of more and more material goods.



Second, people in the so-called “underdeveloped” countries are becoming increasingly unwilling to tolerate the conditions which lead to the wide gap between their standard of living and that of people in affluent countries.

*From Inside Developed Countries*

As Erwin Laszlo (2001) reviews many of the outbreaks of ecosystem destabilization, he suggests that they are the result of what he calls a “Logos-based Civilization” which is causing widening rifts between the rich and poor, between the informed and the marginalized and, at the deepest levels, between technological society and the environment that sustains it. (p. 107)

He calls for a move from Logos to Holos. He looks at our evolution in Logos as “extensive evolution” or horizontal expansion, taking in more territory and things of the material world. In contrast, Holos is an intensive evolution along the dimensions of connection, communications and consciousness. Like many other authors, Laszlo (2001) argues an increasing number of people are ready for a shift in thinking, consciousness and behavior.

One of the most extensive recent pieces of research on this shift was done in the 1990s by demographer and social scientist Paul Ray and Sherry Anderson (2000) They claim that as much as 25% of the population in North America and Europe are “Cultural

Creatives,” people whose values call for more spirituality, less consumption and more connection in their lives. Some argue with the study’s exact numbers, but the notion that more people are ready to make significant changes in their lifestyles has captured the imagination of many people. Other scholars have found additional indicators which suggest material progress is no longer seen as the primary indicator of success. For example, Robert Lane (2000) argues that “amidst the satisfaction people feel with their material progress, there is a spirit of unhappiness and depression haunting advanced market democracies throughout the world, a spirit that mocks the idea that markets maximize well-being.” (p. 3)

While meeting the basic needs of food, shelter, and clothing is very important, Lane (2000) points out that more wealth doesn’t automatically lead to happiness for those who strive to acquire that wealth. For example, over the last sixty years there is a gradual drop in the number of people who believe that monetary and material gain is a significant contributor to their quality of life. Even more interesting are some of Lane’s statistical comparisons that show, over time, while the Gross Domestic Product in the United States has continued to rise, people’s own estimation of their level of happiness has continued to decline.

He points out that after basic life necessities have been secured, there is actually an inverse correlation between income level and happiness. In other words, we make more money, consume more of the world's resources, degrade our ecological balance – all in the name of having better quality of life – and the result is that we are less happy!

Juliet Schor (1992) demonstrates that if we were willing to have the standard of living of our parents, our current technological capacities would make it possible to achieve that standard by working 20 hours a week, or every other year, or some other way of spending half as much time on the job. But consistently we have used technology to increase goods and services rather than to decrease hours worked.

Material progress has been our underlying goal, our main way of achieving a higher quality of life, but increasing numbers of people in the United States and other industrialized countries are opting for a different quality of life. The simplicity movement is one place where this change shows up. Vicki Robin and her New Road Map Foundation (Dominguez & Robin, 1993) continue to attract a great deal of attention as one process for simplifying lifestyle. People are looking for a new story in their lives which reduces stress, creates more time for family and friends and opens the

possibility of further evolution along the holos dimensions Laszlo speaks of. Change is coming from within.

*From Outside “Developed” Countries*

While change in this area of how we perceive quality of life will continue to emerge inside industrialized economies, more of the impetus for deep, systemic change in our way of life may come from outside the United States.<sup>1</sup>

Since September 11, 2001, some people within the United States have become more aware of the global resentments caused by our conspicuous material wealth and high consumption of global natural resources. By and large, people in the United States tend to think in terms of “the haves” (us) and the “have-nots” (the others.) Or we think in terms of the developed countries and the undeveloped countries of the world. It is important to consider the roots of this language and conceptualization. When did material progress become the litmus test for ‘development?’ When and how did the world come to be understood as comprised of haves, and have-nots? When did a minority of the world’s population become

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<sup>1</sup> One of the reasons I have been drawn to the work of young leaders in Africa, Eastern Europe, India, and South America is because I believe the leadership for transformation will come more from people and experiences in these parts of the world.

those who were developed, while the majority was defined by the condition of underdevelopment? It happened at the same time material progress was becoming the single standard for quality of life.

Wolfgang Sachs (1992) picks a moment in time – Truman’s inaugural speech on January 20th, 1949 – as the instant the world was divided into those who were well on the way to the human goal of prosperity and could lead the way for others, and those who needed to be led, helped and aided.

Underdevelopment began then, on January 20, 1949. On that day, two billion people became underdeveloped. In a real sense, from that time on, they ceased being what they were, in all their diversity, and were transmogrified into an inverted mirror of others’ reality: a mirror that belittles them and sends them off to the end of the queue, a mirror that defines their identity, which is really a heterogeneous and diverse majority, simply in terms of a homogenizing and narrow minority. (p. 7)

Sachs (1992) offers a strong and compelling critique of the so-called development project. Conceived and presented as a way to bring prosperity to the rest of the world, the northern countries have gone from 20 times richer than the south in 1960 to being 46 times richer in 1980. (p. 3)

There are three things here which are related, and which seem terribly important to me.

1. We, the developed nations, imposed our definition of success on the rest of the world. We told them that our quality of life was better and, by implication, we were better. People get angry when they are told in various subtle and not so subtle ways that they are not as good as others.
2. People in these countries are beginning to rediscover the deep and important values of their local traditions. They are beginning to see that they have some precious, valuable and different qualities than the so-called developed countries, a difference to be nurtured.
3. People in these same countries are beginning to see how exploitation of their eco-systems in service to the material progress of people in developed countries is doing great damage and they want it stopped.

As people in other parts of the world begin to throw off the definitions of success from developed countries, as they begin to reclaim their own local roots, and as they stop exploitation of their own resources, they will become a great force for change. One of the places where this reclamation is most visible from the United States is in the Zapatista movement in Chiapas, Mexico which became public, not coincidentally, on January 1, 1994, the same

day the North American Free Trade Act, or NAFTA, became the supreme economic law of Canada, the United States and Mexico.

The Zapatista movement had been growing, unseen for many years before the dawning of NAFTA. In the early nineties, after up to 15,000 indigenous people in Chiapas had died of hunger and easily curable diseases (Montalban, 2002, p. 24), the Mexican government instituted land reforms which ended any hopes the peasants had of owning their own land. (Samramago, 2002, p. 383)

What was happening in Chiapas, Subcommandate Marcos, the Zapatista leader believed, was merely an example of what was happening to indigenous people around the world. He noted that worldwide populations of indigenous people, numbering about 300 million, live on lands that contain 60% of the planet's natural resources. (Montalban, 2002, pp. 272-274)

Marcos points out that about 2.6 billion people, who make up more than half of the world's population, have less annual income than the wealth of the 358 richest people in the world. He goes on to point out that it is a blatant lie that globalism produces employment and a better distribution of wealth: in the 1960s and 1970s, the world's poorest population – those earning less than \$1 per day – was about 200 million; by the early 1990s, the number was more than a billion. (Montalban, 2002, p. 276)

Andres Kopkind (2002) says the Zapatista rebellion can be characterized as

a war against the globalization of the market, against the destruction of nature and the confiscation of resources, against the termination of indigenous people and their lands, against the growing maldistribution of wealth and the consequent decline in standards of living for all but the rich.” (p. 19)

The struggle of the 20th century was not the reported struggle between the free market economies of capitalism and the planned economies of communism; it was actually about who would own and control the means of production and how wealth would be distributed. (Montalban, 2002, p. 163) People in underdeveloped countries are becoming vocal in their distrust of production controlled by developed countries and wealth accumulated in those countries.

Many lofty sounding terms have been used to justify globalization – economic integration, structural adjustments, stabilization, and economic rationalization. But, on the ground, where it matters the most, these all translate into using large scale technologies under the control of global financial apparati to take away lands used for subsistence agriculture and food production and use them to cultivate export crops. (Montalban, 2002, p. 432) And, to add salt to the wound, the technologies are often callous in



their devastating impact on the local ecologies. The result, Marcos suggests, is that

the globalized market is destroying small- and medium-sized companies. With the disappearance of local and regional markets, small-and medium-sized producers have no protection and are unable to compete with the great transnationals...Workers are being forced to accept precarious conditions, less job security, longer working hours and lower wages. (p, 278)

People in other parts of the world may come to the same realization the Zapatistas have – that populations of developed countries have become the largest consumers of local resources while at the same time destroying local economies. As the 21st century continues, we may find more people on the planet less willing to support our excesses.

If this pressure from the outside combines with an experience on the inside that increasing material consumption doesn't automatically lead to better quality of life, we will become more open to the idea of fundamental change.

I began this inquiry with these sorts of thoughts and concerns in mind and heart. I began it wondering what might move us beyond ecological destabilization and away from equating quality of live with over-consumption of the world's resources. I began this inquiry wondering how fundamental change might

happen, and how the lives and choices of my co-researchers might illuminate a new path. How do they, as new leaders approach their lives and their work? What guides them as they consider the opportunities and problems present in the communities they serve? Where do they find the support and encouragement they need to serve as leaders in this time?

This thesis is an exploration of these questions.

#### This Inquiry Is Framed Within My Own Work

I have been blessed with a rich set of relationships which have sustained me in my work and which have grounded me as I have engaged in this inquiry. Since 2000 I have had the opportunity to deepen a number of relationships which have helped me inquiry into many questions. In many ways, I have come to believe that there are only two critical questions: what on earth is going on, and what am I supposed to do about it?

These critical questions have been nurtured in core relationships that have included:

1. Serving as a leader of The Berkana Institute (<http://www.berkana.org>). Berkana works globally, supporting life-affirming leaders everywhere by helping them name common areas of endeavor, connecting with

others, nourishing their efforts, and illuminating their work to others in the world.

2. Being a learning partner with Pioneers of Change (<http://www.pioneersofchange.net>), a global network of young people between the ages of 25 and 33 who are committed to examining questions of how to continue their commitments to social justice and ecological integrity that seem to have eluded their parents as they grew older. I am a member of the Pioneers of Change Board of Directors.
3. Supporting Juanita Brown and David Isaacs in their work with to utilize World Café (<http://www.theworldcafe.com>) as an effective process to help larger groups of people deepen their understanding of present realities through intentional conversation.
4. Working in close collaboration with Paul Ray and Sherry Anderson to introduce the concept of Cultural Creatives (<http://www.culturalcreatives.org>) as one way to understand the magnitude of the shift in consciousness taking place. Together, we are discovering how to support people in their journey towards cultural creativity.

5. Consulting with others in the United States who are seeking to bring their work forth in the world in new ways including Joanna Macy and her work on The Great Turning; Vicki Robin and the New Road Map; Tom Atlee and his work on co-intelligence.
6. Discovering a growing global community of older adults around the world who are engaged in these same questions. People like Toke Mueller and Monica Nissen from Denmark, the dames of Hazelwood in England, Miha Pogačnik from Slovenia, Carlos Mota from Mexico and many others who have found their own way into the questions that intrigue me.
7. And, perhaps most important in terms of this dissertation, I have had the opportunity to work closely with each of the people who have been at the center of my inquiry, as well as dozens of others who have dreams that may one day evolve into places and spaces which nourish this life-affirming work.

Through this inquiry I want to help in discovering how we might heal our selves, our industrialized cultures, our global ecosystems and our planet as a whole.

When I look at my sixteen-year-old daughter, I have deep hopes, shadowed by deep fears, for the world I pass along to her. When I travel to villages in Zimbabwe and sit with the men in the hours before dawn, listening to the stories of their lives, my soul is touched by the inequities and injustices afoot in the world. It is time to discover more about how we might change.

I believe the thoughts, feelings and action of the young leaders I have learned from and with in this inquiry are an indicator of how that change might happen. They are operating from new visions about how real change occurs in the world. They see ordinary people everywhere as those who can and will make real differences in their communities. They seem to believe that many small efforts, conceived, born and nurtured separately while being networked together, will make the world a better place to live.

#### My Co-Researchers

Over the last three years I have had very close relationships with a number of young leaders around the world. I met them through my work with *From the Four Directions: People Everywhere Leading the Way*, a global leadership initiative which I co-led at the time with Margaret Wheatley of The Berkana Institute

and Christina Baldwin of PeerSpirit. My relationships with them deepened as I took on more leadership of Berkana, a global institute committed to supporting life-affirming leaders everywhere.

These young leaders inspire me. I see in them the passion, capacity and commitment to make a difference in the world. They have realized that they must be in relationship with each other in order to do their work in the world. Through initiatives like From the Four Directions, and through organizations like Pioneers of Change, they are finding and maintaining those relationships.

In July of 2001, I participated in a gathering at Castle Borl in Slovenia. Well over a hundred people, mostly from Africa and Europe, had gathered for a week to be with each other and to talk about the changes emerging in the world and in their own lives. The week was organized using Open Space principles where people use simple processes to self-organize into very generative meetings.

One open space session was convened by Marianne Knuth, a founder of Pioneers of Change. Marianne, after three years, was stepping forward from her work as one of three global coordinators of Pioneers of Change to create a leadership and learning centre in Zimbabwe. She convened a session to help her think about her approach.

Meg Wheatley and I participated in the session and immediately noticed that most of those present were young leaders who were also feeling called to do as Marianne was doing: work at the local level, establishing new enterprises to help people learn how to step forward as community, organization and business leaders. I began to see the seeds that might grow into a global network of local learning centres.

In January 2002, I convened a meeting in Prague of ten of these young leaders to begin to understand the possibilities of this global network. We saw that there were six centres either established or near birth that were a core of this network. The stories of the founders of these six centres are the core of my research. Their leaders are:

Ante Glavas is the founder of Horizon, established in Zagreb in 1997, to help Croatia and developing countries invest in the most important sector for development – people. Through courses, seminars, and structured programmes, people are educated on the topic that is usually most overlooked in their schooling – themselves. The two main target groups are leaders of business and nonprofit organisations and youth leaders in high schools and universities. The main activities of Horizon are the Youth

Empowerment Programme (which serves 20,000 high school students), The School for Personal and Organisational Development, and The Classroom Programme which offers weekend seminars every other week on different topics.

Cire Kane founded Synapse in Dakar, Senegal in 2002 to unleash the untapped potential of creativity, expertise and resources of youth in Senegal and Africa. He was the West Africa organizer and host for From the Four Directions. He is also a leader of Pioneers of Change. Prior to his work with Synapse, Cire led numerous initiatives in Senegal under a variety of organizational banners.

Manish Jain co-founded Shikshantar in Udaipur, India in late 1998, after serving as a principal architect of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Learning Without Frontiers transnational initiative. Shikshantar is an applied research institute dedicated to catalyzing a radical systemic transformation of the education system and the larger development paradigm in India. They challenge local, national and global structures of exploitation and dehumanization. Manish and his team work directly with local children, youth and families in Udaipur as a Learning



City. They engage in processes which nurture local self-learning capacities, creativity, languages, knowledge systems and media. The institute also conducts “unlearning workshops” with a wide network of community-based organizations around South Asia that assist local leaders in developing their own processes for connecting people with local learning opportunities.

Marianne Knuth founded Kufunda Village in Ruwa, Zimbabwe. Kufunda Village creates locally grounded ways for communities to become more self-reliant. It emphasizes the use of people's own resources and imagination. Kufunda starts with the assumption that people already know how to work in creative and self-sufficient ways and that the challenge is to help them access that knowledge - and the self-confidence to act on it to generate concrete results. In May 2002 Kufunda Village launched its first programme for pioneering youth from different rural communities. They were engaged in a three month joint process of understanding the issues of their communities – why they face particular challenges and how they might solve them in creative ways. In parallel, participants learned and applied specific skills for self-reliance, such as permaculture,

carpentry, pottery, etc. Many more learning programmes have taken place since this first one. Each is devoted to helping people find and develop their own leadership so they may facilitate the creation of joint or individual projects for community renewal and self-sustainability in towns and villages throughout Zimbabwe.

Tim Merry, along with Peter Merry and Arjen Bos in Holland, wanted a new space to play and create. All three had an education in theatre and extensive experience in training for the youth, corporate and governmental sectors. They founded Engage!InterAct in Holland in July of 2001. Engage!InterAct is a training and consulting organization that encourages people to celebrate difference and diversity, and to help them work together to promote and learn from the values of respect, cooperation and creativity.

Zoë and Una Nicholson created LifeWorks in February 2002 in Brighton-Hove, England as a platform which would bring joy and enrichment to them and to those who participated in LifeWorks programs. They hoped that it would enable them to support themselves in a life-affirming way, doing work truly congruent with their values and essence. LifeWorks currently sponsors different learning

programs – sometimes day-long activities, sometimes spread over several months – which bring people together in a variety of types of conversations to learn their way into new possibilities.

### My Core Assumptions

My work is guided by a number of core assumptions, most of which are shared, in whole or in part, by my co-researchers. My assumptions include:

1. We are part of a planetary ecosystem which is in dire straits because of overuse and misuse by industrialized cultures. Damage which is, or may soon become, irreversible has brought our planetary eco-systems to the edge of crisis. Crises include global warming, holes in the ozone layer, massive loss of top soil, depletion of oil and gas reserves, destruction of natural habitats including the oxygenating rain forests, evolution of bacteria potency through overuse of antibiotics, and ground and water contamination from pesticides and fertilizers. These and other trends are potentially devastating and must be reversed.

2. In industrialized countries we have tended to confuse material progress with quality of life. Those of us who live in these nations –perhaps especially those of us who are privileged – may have a higher standard of living, but a lower quality of life than we typically realize. Stress levels, prevalence of depression, growth of prison populations, rising drug use, schoolroom shootings and other crimes of violence are indicators of a population unhappy with its place in the world.
3. The growing gap between the rich and the poor on the planet is intolerable. Not only is it unjust, it is stupid. To expect that people living in this poverty will not rise up time and time again to throw off those they see as their oppressors is short-sighted and deadly. The September 11, 2001, attacks in the United States are one example of actions which can be expected as people rise up in retaliation against what they see as sources of inequity.
4. People have worldviews that shape what they see and how they respond. These worldviews can be made more explicit and we can engage with them. By so doing, we can individually and collectively become more aware of our assumptions, examine the trajectories and implications of

those assumptions, and consider how we might want to continue or change course.

5. Earlier in my life I spent many years working as a so-called “neutral facilitator” at many levels of government and community life. In that work I felt obligated to remove myself as completely as possible from the situation. Now, I have come to believe my responsibility and opportunity is to engage myself fully in all that I do.
6. We are part of a living, vibrant system which is wholly interrelated. While I do not know with certainty that a butterfly flapping her wings in the Amazon results in hurricanes in Florida, I am no longer surprised by the possibility. We must become aware of the many connections and relationships that exist and act as if we are part of a pulsating web of life – because we are.
7. Change in systems happens at points and times of bifurcation when an old system destabilizes and a new one that was mostly, if not totally, invisible comes into existence. We are at a point of bifurcation, where sudden shifts of substantial magnitude are not only possible, but are imminent.

8. A shift in consciousness is required if we are to move beyond the problems and perils which threaten our planet and the people living on it. As Einstein has observed, problems are not solved at the level of consciousness where they were created.
9. We are all influenced by the stories of others. The images, feelings, thoughts and emotions which come to us when we are invited to listen deeply to stories of people's lives are transformative.
10. New forms and practices of leadership are required to meet the challenges and opportunities for transformation. Leadership which is only capable of embracing incremental change is no longer sufficient. Leadership which helps us leap into a new future, waiting to be born, is what is required.

This list of assumptions is, of course, incomplete. Each day I lead a conscious, reflective life I become aware of additional assumptions which influence the ways in which I see the world. What seems critical to me is that I continually create a current, conscious awareness of my assumptions and consider whether they are simply old memories which no longer help to explain my

experience, or if they provide guidance to help me move forward in my life.

### The Opportunity

I believe the leaders of the new social movements described in this inquiry embrace a new way of understanding how major change occurs in the world. They have a new approach to change. This approach is fueled by more time spent knowing themselves, a recognition of the failures and dangers of past social, economic and ecological policies, and a willingness to think, live and act differently. The ways they think about and understand their lives and their work in the world seem different than the ways I remember that other young activists and I approached social change in the 1970s, when we were in our twenties and thirties.

The opportunity this inquiry addresses is one of making the assumptions, images, feelings and mental models of these leaders more explicit so others may learn from and with them. There is an opportunity to use their stories and experience as a basis for reflective learning which may increase our collective capacity to pursue systemic change which alleviates the social problems and issues we are facing today.

### Inquiry Question

What do the stories, life experience and work of seven young leaders reveal about a new spirit and practice of leadership in the world?

### Purpose

This inquiry seeks to make the principles, values, practices, and assumptions that ground these pioneers more visible to us all.

### Definitions

Certain terms are of particular importance in this thesis. I offer these definitions as an invitation into the spirit of my inquiry.

#### *Appreciative Inquiry* is

a collaborative and highly participative, system-wide approach seeking, identifying, and enhancing the 'life-giving forces' that are present when a system is performing optimally in human, economic, and organizational terms. (Watkins & Mohr, 2001, p. 14)

In this dissertation an appreciative inquiry approach is used for data gathering as well as analysis.

*Centre* is an example of the use of British spelling of certain terms. I have done this because most of the centres featured in this inquiry use British spelling for this and other words. I find it a useful reminder of the global nature of this inquiry.



*Co-Researcher* is the term used to describe the participants/subjects in an Organic Inquiry. They are seen as a vital part of the research, not the subject of it. Part of the purpose of the study is to deepen the co-researchers' own understandings of the topics under consideration.

*Leadership* as I use it in this thesis is life-affirming leadership, a term defined by The Berkana Institute in 2000. A leader is anyone, anywhere, who wants to help restore balance to life on this planet. This leadership may show up in peoples own lives, their families, their communities, their organizations or the broader networks in which they work. It is leadership which holds all forms of life on the planet as sacred. It is similar to James Rost's (1993) definition of leadership as a collaborative relationship for change, based on the fluid movement of people from roles in which they serve as leaders to roles in which they serve as followers.

*Living Systems* is a way of apprehending the world as an integrated whole which cannot usefully be reduced to smaller parts. Each action in each part of the system, however apparently small, has potential repercussions throughout the entire system. Understanding the overall identity of the system, the relationships within the system and the way information flows are keys to

understanding how a system functions. In this dissertation, the planet Earth is viewed as a living system.

*Organic Inquiry* is

the interwoven stories of the women and men who offer their experience of the topic being studied. These stories, beginning with the researcher's own tale, are the material from which meaning will grow. Because stories speak from the heart as well as from the intellect, they communicate and transform on many levels from archetypal and unconscious realms to rational and intentional ones. The mystery and creativity of these stories are the soul of organic inquiry... (Clements, Ettlign, Jenett, & Shields, 1998, p. 10)

*Spiritual* is a term used time and time again by these leaders as one way of describing the "energy field" within which they work. By quieting our minds, centering our beings, opening ourselves to the mystery of the universe, we enter into a deep field of right-relationship with all material and non-material beings. In this thesis words like spirit, spiritual, and enspirited all point towards that field.

*Spaces and Places* is a term I have found myself using frequently over the last year. While some of the work of interest to me takes place in centres, that is not always the case. All of the work is highly place-based – even when done by people who travel to a given place to do their work and then call in the presence of

the place through the local people who participate. All of it takes place in a construct of place which extends into space, creating fields of endeavor.

*Worldviews* are, simply, the lenses through which different people view the world. They are the frameworks through which we decide what has importance and what we will pay attention to. They are based on our assumptions about how the world works. Living Systems is one worldview. The world as a machine which can be regulated, controlled and fixed when needed is another. The world as the creation of an all-knowing God is another. Our worldviews are the basis for how we live and interact in the world.

#### Delimitations and Limitations

In many ways, this inquiry is a continuing work in progress. I am, and will continue to be, deeply engaged in the questions and issues examined in this study. This thesis reports on interviews and conversations with seven young leaders who have begun learning centres in six different countries on three different continents. I have collected their stories through interviews and engaged in numerous conversations about the nature of the work we share. Their stories represent their own life experiences and

are not necessarily representative of the lives and experiences of others.

The results of this inquiry will be used to guide my work and will be made available to others concerned with the global dimensions of change in these times to illuminate their own work and reflections. I make no claims to the discovery of ultimate truths. I seek to make the assumptions and mental models of these leaders more explicit so we collectively can continue to learn with each other about ways to move ahead in these times.

This study will always be incomplete. I am attempting to catch a useful picture of emergent phenomena. Can people scattered all over the planet, doing the work they are called to while intentionally holding relationship with each other, actually change the world? I believe we can.

And, finally, what is written here comes through my own voice, deeply influenced by my co-researchers and others with whom I have conversed, by the books I have read, and by my own ongoing internal processes of observing, assessing, intuiting and analyzing. I am limited, and this study will both benefit from and be restricted by these many limitations.

## Significance of the Study

I am blessed by the presence of many colleagues, collaborators and peers in my life. Many of us around the world are finding each other as we learn how to live our lives with a new integrity. We, individually and collectively, are life-affirming leaders and in many ways I do this work on behalf of all of us. This study will begin to make visible a new form of leadership, a new story of leadership that is emerging in the world. This study may become a reference point for those of us who are engaged in social change initiatives.

What may be of particular significance is that this study concentrates on young women and men who, for the most part, work in parts of the world often referred to as “underdeveloped.”

Wolfgang Sachs and his co-authors (1992) make the case that when, in 1949, U.S. President Harry Truman divided the world into developed and underdeveloped, much of the world came to be characterized by what it lacked, and success came to be defined in terms of the industrialized, consumption-driven achievement of higher and higher material standards of living.

These new leaders work outside that standard of success. I suspect that the leadership necessary to go beyond our current ways of knowing, thinking and being in the world will come from

leaders such as these young pioneers – leaders who work outside this western industrialized culture’s model of development. By concentrating on the thoughts and experience of this group, I hope to be able to be of particular service to my colleagues, collaborators and peers on all parts of the planet.

One particular significance I hope for is that this work will help the main organization I work with – The Berkana Institute – build its capacity to connect leaders everywhere and to help them discover tools, practices and each other. I hope, in addition, that Berkana will be more able to reflect and learn with this global network of young leaders so that we may, in partnership, nurture a new form of social action represented in the centres birthed by these leaders.

I hope that leaders everywhere who are finding a spark of possibility around the notion of creating *spaces and places* where people step into their own leadership potential will be empowered by this work. I hope it will help them find language and vision and courage to step forward, knowing they are not alone, but, rather, in the company of so many others.

I hope my many older friends and colleagues will find ways to step into roles of companions, elders, friends and occasionally guides for these young leaders. As these new leaders begin to

circle together, the place for those of us who have been in our generation's version of this work is not in the center, but on the rim – supporting these new leaders as they do their work and trusting our intuition to know when to step forward into the center simply to help with what is needed.

This inquiry is one of many attempts to understand what is possible in the world. In unorganized concert with these other attempts, it may be significant.

## CHAPTER TWO -- RESEARCH APPROACH

My research methodology is Organic Inquiry. Its emphasis on the use of story has allowed me to sink deeply into the lived experiences of these young leaders. Since 2001 I have spent hundreds of hours in conversation with these leaders, reading their writings and thinking about their work and mine. I have sat around campfires and in circle and in council. I have leaned on café tables, and rocked in chairs on balconies at the foot of snow-capped peaks. I have traveled to a number of places around the world. I have sat with many, many young people, with others as old as I and even with a few who think of themselves as “ancestors-in-training.” As I began to conceptualize my dissertation, I realized that what I wanted to do was to harvest the wisdom implicit and explicit in their stories. As I reviewed different research methodologies, organic research gave me a framework within which I could grow this inquiry.

### Paradigmatic Assumptions

My work has been guided by the form and principles of Organic Inquiry, rooted within a participatory paradigm.



The participatory worldview emphasizes the person as an embodied experiencing subject among other subjects. It asserts that we are part of a living creative cosmos which we co-inhabit with other creatures and beings. Responding to the emerging mood of our times, it emphasizes integration of action with knowing. It steps beyond the mechanical metaphor which underpins positivism, provides models for action inquiry and above all offers a more satisfying myth by which to live. (Heron & Reason, 1997)

*Ontologically speaking*, this paradigm suggests we live in a sacred, co-created universe. Each of us is an active partner in creating the reality we experience and we have access to an internal spiritual authority which can guide us as we engage in this continual act of co-creation.

*Epistemologically speaking*, the participatory paradigm suggests that we create meaning based on our pre-existing worldviews and that the meaning we create shapes our perceptions of the world and, in turn, shapes the world. Four ways of knowing characterize the participatory paradigm, according to John Heron and Peter Reason (1997): experiential, presentational, propositional and practical.

Experiential knowing is our direct experience where we get a sense which is intuitive, emotional, and sensual. It is a knowing before words are attached and concepts formed which we bring into our awareness.

Presentational knowing emerges from experiential knowing and is a way of sharing our experience with others through stories, enactments, dance and other forms to make the nature of our experiencing visible.

Propositional knowing is when we take our experience and shape it into concepts and constructs which can be used to describe a wide body of related experiences.

Practical knowing is what happens when we use knowledge as the basis for skill and competence and do something in the world.<sup>2</sup>

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2 Heron and Reason (Heron & Reason, 1999) offer a pithy definition of these four ways of knowing:

Experiential knowing is through direct face-to-face encounter with person, place or thing; it is knowing through empathy and resonance, and is almost impossible to put into words. Presentational knowing emerges from experiential knowing, and provides the first form of expression by drawing on expressive forms of imagery through story, drawing, sculpture, movement, dance and so on. Propositional knowing "about" something, is knowing through ideas and theories, expressed in informative statements. Practical knowing is knowing "how to" do something and is expressed in a skill, knack or competence.

My own worldview and my own lived experience stand within this approach. When I and others founded Northwest Regional Facilitators in 1974, its mission was “to work with people in Spokane and other Northwest communities to envision the future they wanted and work collaboratively to create it.” I believe that we collectively fashion the world in which we live. Within the constraints and the possibilities of a range of driving forces, people collectively build community and build their own lives.

Sometimes, that power or authority is given over to others. I believe we are in a time when more people are reclaiming their own power and consciously acting as co-creators of their own worlds. This inquiry concentrates on the power being reclaimed by young leaders in different parts of the world as they work to address issues of ecological destabilization, social and economic inequities, deterioration of real quality of life and other important issues of our times.

In reading Heron and Reason’s (1997) formulation of the Participatory Paradigm, I was particularly engaged when they spoke of the triad of hierarchy, co-operation and autonomy. They suggest that

The shadow face of authority is authoritarianism; that of collaboration peer pressure and conformity; that of autonomy narcissism, willfulness and isolation. The challenge is to design institutions which manifest valid forms of these principles; and to find ways in which they can be maintained in self-correcting and creative tension.

This kind of flourishing is practical knowing: knowing how to choose and act - hierarchically, cooperatively, autonomously - to enhance personal and social fulfillment and that of the eco-networks of which we are a part. Such human fulfillment is consummated in the very process of choosing and acting. (p, 11)

I believe that Heron and Reason (1997) have hit upon one of the critical issues of our time: the weaving together of wisdom and vision – which they in this definition characterize as authority or hierarchy – with collaborative knowing and with individual insight and capacity. Many of the conversations I have had with young leaders end up moving into this territory as they, and I, try to find balance with respect to these three domains. Furthermore, what Heron and Reason point to as the challenge of designing institutes which maintain these three principles in a dynamic tension is a key challenge faced by the centres these leaders have created.

I would offer one expansion of Heron and Reason's participatory paradigm. I have moved away from their use of the word "hierarchy," which, in its common usage bespeaks power, control and domination. Heron and Reason (1997) define the term

“hierarchy” as meaning “greater vision, skill and experience.” (p. 10) In common usage “hierarchy” often is confused as a term for power, control and domination. From my perspective, it seems more appropriate to characterize this domain, which is so critical to the participatory paradigm according to its substance (wisdom), rather than by its structure (hierarchy).

Hierarchy itself is not the issue. Hierarchies emerge and dissolve to meet the organizational need which may be present in different organisms, and systems, at different points in time. When hierarchies become rigid, and lose their ability to shift, they become a means to dominate and control.

Because the term hierarchy is frequently misunderstood, it is important is to find a better term which illustrates this aspect of the participatory paradigm. I believe wisdom is that term. According to *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, wisdom is defined as “the ability to discern or judge what is true, right, or lasting; insight. ” (2000) It is this capacity of discernment that needs to be interwoven with the other two aspects of the participatory paradigm: collaboration and autonomous action.

This clarification is particularly important given what I believe to be the nature of the *enspired* leadership I describe in

this thesis. Wisdom plays a critical role in *enspirited* leadership. Hierarchy is only one many structures that might be used to guide the collaboration or the action that emerge from *enspirited* leadership.

My co-researchers in this inquiry appear to me to reach, from time-to-time, to what Robert Kegan (1994) defines as a fifth order consciousness (described further in chapter four – literature review). At Kegan’s fifth order (p. 318), people are capable of moving beyond ideology and are able to stand within paradox, contradiction and oppositeness. They have moved to an order of consciousness where multiple truths are not only accepted, they are enthusiastically embraced as pathways for inquiry. Operating consistently at this order of consciousness requires and evokes wisdom which may be expressed through a variety of forms of relationship, including hierarchy.

Holding these three together – wisdom, collaboration, and autonomous action – in a period of megashifts in global culture seems essential. It means learning to stand in complex paradox. It means moving to a zone of profound unknowing, which is, of course, rooted in deep knowing. What is the wisdom being applied? How is it held and used collectively? How is it held with the complexities of individual competence and capacity? How are

these young leaders, and all of us, learning with and in the world, in this time of change?

The participatory paradigm within which I work calls for a co-evolving mix of wisdom, collaboration and autonomous action. It recognizes that important work in the world right now is a grand and important experiment which requires the wholehearted involvement of all participants as learners.

I have placed my work in the broader participatory paradigm because one of my most fundamental beliefs is that our human species is co-creating the world around us. We can do so blindly, or we can do so consciously. The participatory paradigm is an invitation to us all to become conscious co-creators.

### Research Method

I have embraced Organic Inquiry as my overall approach. Organic Inquiry embraces all ways of knowing including emotion, intuition, and thinking as essential tools to deepen understanding. My selection of Organic Inquiry is a natural outgrowth of my choice to situate my work in the participatory paradigm. Full participation invites us to bring forward the complex range of our personal experience. Full participation calls on us to access our deepest

levels of knowing, share that knowing with others, and to act while learning from our actions so that we may be transformed.

The overall goal of any Organic Inquiry is to invite all who participate in the work to be transformed, co-researchers and readers alike. This methodology requires a full immersion of the researcher and all of his or her ways of knowing to bring forth the stories and images which may provide the pathways for the reader's transformation. Organic Inquiry is built around a five step process:

Sacred - Preparing the Ground

Personal - Planting the Seed

Chthonic - The Roots Emerge

Relational - Growing the Tree

Transformative - Harvesting the Fruit

### *Sacred*

Organic Inquiry is, at its heart, a sacred process. It calls upon the researcher to open one's self to the mysteries of life and to enter into the inquiry as free as possible from old habits and expectations.



This first step, this sacred dimension of the process – preparing the soil – calls for time spent journaling, meditating, reading poetry, and spending time in nature.

### *Personal*

Organic inquiry asks that the researcher fully immerse his or herself in their life experiences, unlike other methodologies which ask the researcher to become distant and objective. “The primary researcher serves as a guide to the reader’s experience of the stories by using her or his own story as a conscious point of departure for the analysis of all the others.” (Clements et al., 1998, p31)

The researcher’s personal journey and the likely transformation of the researcher through the journey becomes the ground from which the inquiry is conducted.

### *Chthonic*

Organic inquiry takes on a life of its own in its third stage, the chthonic stage. Beyond the proposals and plans and strategies, the shape of an organic inquiry begins to emerge. As the researcher pays attention to his or her dreams, meditations, synchronicities and experiences, the roots of the inquiry deepen.

### *Relational*

The fourth dimension of Organic Inquiry is relational, the growing of the tree. It is where the limbs and branches and leaves begin to take on their full presence in the world. The stories of those involved in the research begin to take on a character of their own. The stories may at times appear to move together to form a greater narrative and at times stay separate, describing the particular experience of the co-researchers in the full context of the experience.

The emphasis is on the full story that is emerging: the feelings and thoughts and inspirations which can invite a reader to touch his or her own experience of those realms.

### *Transformative*

This thesis is the fifth dimension of Organic Inquiry – harvesting the fruit in the transformative dimension. It is the time to bring the stories forth so that I as storyteller, my co-researchers with their own stories and the stories of their combined experience and my readers can all be transformed by it. This is much more than looking for trends and composite results: it is a process of looking for the integral meanings which are emerging in the inquiry

and finding the way to make these meanings more visible in the world.

Organic Inquiry aims to integrate reflection and action. Like other forms of human inquiry, its purpose “is not so much to search for truth but to heal, and above all heal the alienation, the split that characterizes modern experience.” (Reason, 1994, p. 12) Through the presentation of a thesis which is both inviting and evocative, the researcher hopes to create a field of experience for the reader which offers the possibility for the reader’s healing and transformation.

### Research Procedures

As I describe in chapter three, section C, this thesis is the result of an ongoing inquiry, a lived inquiry in which I have been immersed in conversation, writing, meditation, and reflection. In some ways, it has neither beginning nor end because the inquiry, itself, is part of a co-creative process which is helping new leadership to emerge in the world. Chapter three, section C provides a narrative of my experience. Here I offer a description of the events and procedures through which this thesis itself has been produced. I will use the stages of Organic Inquiry as my framework.

*Sacred - Preparing the Ground*

In July 2001 with a number of friends and colleagues I participated in a global learning village held at Castle Borl in Slovenia. Marianne Knuth, one of my co-researchers in this inquiry, called a workshop session where people were invited to think with her about her plans to move to her mother's country – Zimbabwe – to create a local learning leadership centre. A close colleague and I both noticed how many others participating in this workshop session expressed a calling to create similar enterprises.

Through the summer and fall of 2001 I would return regularly to thinking about what was happening with these young leaders. I spent time on the land and in various council circles wondering about these questions. I wrote in my journals and many e-mails about this calling different people were responding to create local leadership learning centres. Eventually, I offered to host a session to further explore this phenomenon. It was during this time period that I began to see that this work might be the subject of my dissertation.

Throughout 2001 I engaged in many conversations and wrote in my journal about my thoughts and feelings as this inquiry began to emerge.

### *Personal - Planting the Seed*

In January 2002, I hosted a three day meeting in Prague attended by about a dozen others, including six of my seven co-researchers. Manish was unable to join us. At that meeting we explored the types of local leadership learning centres people were feeling called to create, as well the creation of a global network of such centres.

The Prague meeting was a starting point in the development of this global network. It was also a time in which my dissertation proposal was gestating within me. I wrote and re-wrote and then wrote again my research proposal in the winter and spring of 2002. By early summer I had my committee's approval.

I selected my seven co-researchers because of those who had been gathering and writing about the idea of local leadership learning centres, they were the ones who had actually stepped into an implementation phase – they were taking their ideas forward into action.

I returned again to Castle Borl in July of 2002. There I continued to engage in activities that allowed the subjects of this inquiry to begin to take shape within me. Conversations, writing, walking the Slovenian hills were all an important part of this stirring within me. Synchronously, the Dalai Lama came to

Slovenia at the same time and I was able to go hear him speak. The simplicity and directness of his words infused me with deep sense of interconnection with other life on the planet and added spirit to my inquiry.

I collected three stories in July 2002. On the very last day possible at our Castle Borl gathering, I summoned up my courage, set aside my resistance, and began to collect the stories for this dissertation. Zoë and Una and I lunched at a hilltop restaurant overlooking Slovenia vineyards as I collected their story. Using a small audio recorder which could be later downloaded into my computer, I began. The next morning, I collected Tim's story, as we sat under the walls of the castle. I then traveled to Zagreb to spend several days working with Horizon. During this time I collected Ante's story.

I had hoped to collect Cire's story as well, during this time in Europe. Unfortunately he was unable to come to this gathering. In September 2002 I participated in a Pioneers of Change annual summer school in Mexico, and Cire was to have been there. He was forced to cancel his participation because of visa problems. In Mexico, I continued a process I had begun in the summer at Castle Borl of noticing what books and references came up in different conversations, and begin to pursue those which sounded as if they

were part of this inquiry. It was at this time that I was exposed to the work of Gustavo Esteva and Madhu Suri Prakash (Esteva & Prakash, 1998) and Subcommandate Marcos (Hayden, 2002) (described further in chapter four – literature review) which have helped to focus my understanding of the importance of the local work of these young leaders.

In November 2002 Marianne and Manish and I all participated in a Berkana Institute Board of Directors meeting. Manish and I sat for two hours in the baggage claim area of the Salt Lake City airport while I collected his story. Marianne and I sat in our colleague Meg's home in the Utah mountains while I collected her story.

Finally, in December 2002, during Ramadan while Cire was home visiting his parents, I collected Cire's story by phone, our attempts to get together in person having been twice thwarted.

I meditated for a time before I began to collect each story. I let go of pre-conceptions to come to a place of pure curiosity. I used a table microphone and a small digital audio recorder that had an audio file output I could download to my computer. I began each session with the same simple question: "So, what is it that led you to this life you live, and you to it?" After each session I would download a copy of the files to my computer.

There was an excitement, an energy, perhaps a field of possibilities that began to surround us as I collected the first story from Una and Zoë. One thing I noticed was that anytime I started to probe, or ask clarifying questions, the energy went down. Anytime I offered something from my experience which was congruent with the story being shared, the energy went up. I learned to relax, to simply be in the story as a listener and conversant.

#### *Chthonic - The Roots Emerge*

As 2002 came to a close, I finally had all six stories for the dissertation. My intuition told me that I neither wanted to transcribe, nor even listen to any of the separate stories until I had collected them all. I wanted to stay in a wide open space, and I had done so.

I had planned to dive into the data analysis right away, but the universe had different plans for me. On December 28, 2002, I was gifted with a major leg break as a result of a minor skiing accident. One friend of mine reflected that “spirit had given me a speeding ticket.” My recuperation from this accident took almost two months during which I did, indeed, rest. A broken leg rather



thoroughly disrupted my pace! During this time of recuperation, I would often find myself dwelling in the stories I had collected.

In March 2003 I traveled by crutch, wheelchair and airplane to a gathering of my global tribe in the north of England. In spite of the difficulty of travel, I simply knew I needed to be there. The meeting had been organized by Tim, Una and Zoë to discuss ideas for a major gathering in the summer of 2004. We spent two days and two nights talking about what was co-arising within us, and then moved back into our normal lives.

I returned from this meeting and in the spring of 2003 I began to transcribe the stories I had collected. I felt almost overwhelmed by the riches offered to me in these stories. I continued my various readings, invited in various directions by direct and indirect references from the stories.

I transcribed the stories myself. I listened to the audio files and made close to verbatim transcriptions. In doing so, I literally re-immersed myself in the stories as they had been unfolding. I continued to participate in many conversations about this work and to journal about what I noticed and wondered.

*Relational - Growing the Tree*

In the July 2003 I returned to Castle Borl for the third summer in a row. It was there that I began the writing of this thesis. Seated, again, on a Slovenia hillside overlooking vineyards, I began to re-read my proposal and the transcripts of all the stories. I let my mind wander and the questions of this inquiry filled my mind and heart as I wrote and walked and meditated. I was still recovering from my broken leg, but I knew it was time to begin to walk. Each day I would walk a bit further, from my hillside cottage several miles from the Castle. Each day I would get a little further before Una, who was sharing the cottage with me, would drive along to pick me up. Each day I would wander with these stories.

From Slovenia, I traveled to Prague for the wedding of one of the leaders of Pioneers of Change, Mille Bojer. A global community had gathered to celebrate this event with her, including Marianne. Those of us who gathered talked late into the night many evenings, and walked many kilometers exploring a summertime Prague. For my part, I would bring our conversations around to the questions of this inquiry.

In August 2003 I began to search the stories for main themes. The ones presented in this thesis began to emerge. I

shared my preliminary findings with my co-researchers and began to further refine my thoughts.

In September 2003 I traveled to another Pioneers of Change summer school, this time on the Sinai Peninsula of Egypt. There, on a Bedouin Oasis in the Sinai desert as well as in a small hotel on the Red Sea, I gathered with 50 people from 20 or so countries to talk about what's happening in the world. This event was particularly special because my spouse, Susan Virnig, was able to join us as well. Susan had been one of the co-founders of Northwest Regional Facilitators in the mid-seventies and had co-lead the organization with me for 20 years. It was a delight to have her and these hearty Pioneers meet. I had spoken so frequently of each to the other. The conversations Susan and I had after the Pioneers meeting undoubtedly helped me to further clarify the themes I saw and also assisted her in helping me make my meaning clear when she review later drafts to provide editorial assistance. The preliminary conclusions of the thesis were beginning to take shape, and find depth, through the conversations held in Egypt – under the full moon on the Sinai, and along the quiet dawn shores of the Red Sea.

By December 2003 I reviewed a preliminary draft of the dissertation with my committee chair. We agreed on the steps

needed to send the draft to my committee for the consultative review.

This review was held in mid January 2004.

During this time, I read through the transcripts on a number of occasions. I looked back through other materials – e-mails, journal entries in our online collaboration system, memories of conversations. I looked for what themes, categories and patterns might emerge. As I began to see the themes, I cut and pasted quotes from the story collecting into the section on themes. What resulted were theme sections that were very long, and which somehow lost the thread of the people's stories.

I went back and wrote each of their stories, using mostly the material I had collected directly from them, augmented from time to time with material I had from other sources. Then, I wrote each of the theme sections, drawing from the materials I had and telling the story of the theme, rather than incorporating so much of the story of the person. As I did this, the categories shifted some. One or two disappeared. One or two emerged.

I then shared all of the stories and the themes with my co-researchers for their review and comment. As they responded, I made changes and additions.

*Transformative - Harvesting the Fruit*

Now, in this writing, the fruits of this inquiry are being harvested. In January 2004, when I sent my semi-final draft to my committee, I also invited my co-researchers and about 20 other colleagues to read and comment on the work. I asked that they respond, in particular, to the sections on themes and on the meta-story. Their responses raised a number of questions for further inquiry which are included in the epilogue chapter.

While the fruits of this inquiry are being harvested, new seeds are being planted. This is not so much an end, is a new beginning as I and others continue to explore the questions and issues involved in an inquiry about global transformation. This inquiry is part of an infinite game, as described by James Carse (1986). It is without end, because these questions have no final answer – only an invitation to continual curiosity about what it is that is trying to be born.

I continued to sit with all this material. Writing, honing. Each time I had a completed set of materials, I would ask my spouse, who is both a technical writer and a creative non-fiction writer, to review the materials and point out errors in grammar and formatting and to note where my writing was unclear. I received similar assistance from my dissertation chair and

committee and from my reviewers. And I received further assistance from the technical reviewer CIIS requires doctoral candidates to hire.

### Verification

This inquiry required validation methods which embrace the full subjectivity of my work. In some ways the most important validation is what Braud and Anderson (1998) call pragmatic criteria. “How would this world be different,” they ask,

if everyone in the world behaved in accord with her or his findings – that is, what would be the fruits of such knowledge – and if everyone used the likelihood of positive action outcomes based on the findings as another indicator of the validity? (1998, p. 230)

Braud and Anderson (1998) say earlier that “transpersonal psychology reminds us that in addition to our faculty of intellect, we possess, as well, facets of body, emotion, spirit, community, and creative expression.” (p. 214)

This inquiry is providing fruit that fuels the body, emotion, community and creative expression of many of us concerned with issues raised here. It is important is to verify these findings and to extend a broad invitation to be in these questions. While this particular phase of this inquiry comes to a conclusion with the completion of this thesis, the inquiry as a whole will continue.

I have worked with three different groups of people to help me assure the findings I am advancing here have validity:

1. I have shared my research with my co-researchers as the group most intimately involved with my findings. At all stages of the research I have asked them to review and comment on my drafts and I have been in regular conversation with them between these times of more formal review.
2. I have spoken with a broad range of young leaders around the world with whom I am in regular contact and have asked them for review and comment on my findings as they have evolved. I chose this second group because they themselves embody many of the leadership characteristics I have been working to make more visible through this thesis. They and I have had, and will continue to have, many conversations about these themes, ideas and speculations.
3. Finally, I have asked for a group of older peers who are leaders of various social transformation initiatives to discuss my ideas as they have evolved and to review and comment on my work. People in this group have expressed great interest in the themes and ideas and ways of being

in the world my co-researchers embody and they have many years of experience as leaders of different enterprises. Their perspective, as older leaders has helped me to keep a broad focus on this research.

In addition to engaging in regular correspondence and conversation with people in each of these groups throughout the period of this inquiry, I shared my semi-final drafts with them and asked for responses and reflections. Chapter six, my epilogue, is constructed from their responses and comments.

#### Subject Consent

This was done according to normal CIIS procedures. All participants were informed that our conversations were being recorded as part of this dissertation process. They were given full right of review of all references to them and their work. They were informed of how to contact CIIS should they have any concerns about this process. They received and signed a release form which was approved by the CIIS Human Research Review Committee that spelled out these provisions.

#### The Use of Literature

I have used a non-traditional approach to literature as embraced in Organic Inquiry. In this thesis it is my intent to bring



“academic theory into the realm of personal experience where it may be understood in a more personal way by the reader”

(Clements et al., 1998, p. 106). Throughout the inquiry I was constantly looking for the inter-play between the stories of this inquiry and the ideas, feelings, constructs and visions that are surfacing in the world today.

I have used literature as a way to deepen and expand the meaning I found in the different themes I saw emerging in the stories of these leaders and in their work.

## CHAPTER THREE – THE STORY UNFOLDS

And so we come to this. What have I actually heard and learned in the hearing?

This section is the core of my dissertation where I will:

Share the stories of the seven people I have asked to join me most directly in this inquiry. Who are they? What are their values and orientation? What has led them to this time in their lives?

Look at their work. This is a story of centres as well, of spaces and places where people gather to step into this work. Brief descriptions of their work follow the presentation of each of their stories. A more complete description of the work is found in Attachment One.

Surface the themes. There are differences in their stories and work. There are some common themes as well. The differences mean there is no single set of “right conditions” for being in this work. The themes suggest there are indicators we might look for.

Chronicle my lived inquiry. This thesis is in some ways an epic. It is situated in the totality of my life and is, in particular a chronicle of my organic inquiry from the time

this topic began to materialize in a circle of co-researchers outside the walls of a Slovenian Castle in the summer of 2001.

### Their Stories

I have gathered the stories of these seven people who have stepped forward and begun learning leadership centres, grounded in a certain culture and a particular geographic place. Three years ago, at the beginning of 2001 they were mostly unknown to each other. They have become companions during these last few years. And I have become their companion as well.

These stories provide a glimpse of their lives. For the most part these stories are drawn from interviews I held with them, as described in the procedures section of this thesis. I have also incorporated, in some cases, materials from other sources which are cited as such.

Figure 1



*Ante Glavas of Croatia*

Horizon – <http://www.horizont.hr>

Ante Glavas and Damir Cicak formulated the idea for Horizon in the mid-1990s. Both had been members of AIESEC, where they'd discovered how it feels to work with passion, and developed the belief that there's more to life than the values promoted by the dominant commercial culture. In June 1999 they created Horizon, an educational institution, to invest in the development of human capital in the context of the rebuilding of post-war Croatia in transition from socialism. In a place where generations have grown up with the assumption of being taken care of by the government, Horizon aspires to help people learn

how to think and develop for themselves, and realize that they have choices in their lives. See Appendix for more details.

Ante's father had been an activist in the "Croatian Spring" of 1968 and had to flee his country. He ended up an expatriate, living in the United States, yet maintaining a deep love for his native land. Ante was born in Chicago in 1973. By the time he was a teenager, Ante was in and out of trouble all the time. In many ways he was a living symbol of the angry young man.

A peer ministries program called "Kyros" came into his life when he was 13. It taught active listening. Most importantly, it taught Ante about himself and others. "Don't take anything for granted; always ask questions!" was the underlying philosophy of the program. When I was collecting Ante's story in the summer of 2002, he still had the materials from the peer ministries program in his apartment closet.

I learned that every single person I had in my group was a very deep person. Some of them I knew well from high school – like from the soccer team – and I never thought of them as deep people. There was this one guy from the soccer team; typical Chicago boy, hanging out with the gangs, drug problems, very close to committing suicide. All of them had their own problems – low income, there on scholarship and rich spoiled kids. The key lesson I learned was that all you really need to do is sit there and listen to people. The person you see walking down the hall of your school is a key part of your life. Every person I pass on the

street -- who knows how much each person will affect me? This was a turning point in my life.

After Tito's death, things in Yugoslavia began to change.

Among the changes was a deep call from the Croats to re-establish their own country. In the early nineties, Ante's parents told him they were going back to Croatia. Unlike his sister, he was given the option of staying in America or going back to Croatia with them.

I already had my whole life set out. I had one and a half years of college already done through Advanced Placement in high school. I wanted to be an Actuary and make a lot of money. I had been accepted at three universities; my master's degree was already paid for. It was no stretch – I was good at math.

But I had this feeling 'ah, I want to go to Croatia.' I got the feeling – 'I gotta go.' It was irrational. Everyone tried to talk me out of it.

I guess I realized that the things in the United States were not what I wanted. I realized there is a lot more to life than just sitting around making money and I thought I had this mission to go out and change the world. And I thought Croatia was the place to do it. There was something – I was being called here. I couldn't have said that then, it just felt like something really big was being moved.

And so Ante moved to Zagreb. He entered college and studied economics – but in Croatia the only economics that professors understood were communist economics. There really wasn't much to learn. So Ante began hanging out at a café every day. "It was a real hot spot. There was always a table reserved for

me and this other guy with coffee and small brandy. We'd sit around all day and talk and pick up chicks and stuff.”

It became a tense and challenging time for Ante. Serbia and Croatia were at war. In Croatia itself there were strong feelings about being betrayed by the United States government. Ante, the street kid from Chicago, was thrown in the middle of it. While in college he traveled around Europe as an ambassador-at-large, telling the story of Croatia. Also while in college he, like others in this dissertation, became active in *Association Internationale des Etudiants en Sciences Economiques et Commerciales* (AIESEC)<sup>3</sup>. He recalls one international meeting he went to as the leader of the Croatian delegation. “There was also a delegation there from Bosnia – and a lot of tension in the room.” In that place of miracles fueled by good intentions and conversation and beer, the young people in each delegation started to see each other as they were – caring people, concerned about the state of the world, stepping into their lives.

Ante came to some deep realizations during this period.

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3 AIESEC – the initials are a French acronym for *Association Internationale des Etudiants en Sciences Economiques et Commerciales* is “the world’s largest student organization, a global network of 50,000 members across more than 83 countries and territories at more than 800 universities world-wide.” See <http://www.aiesec.org>

All the time I was motivated to do something it was out of hatred for what humans do. I was working out of a position of hatred. But when you work out of a position of love, then a lot of things can happen.

Looking back, anytime I was working out of a position of love – like with the Kyros Program in High School - things just happened. And if I worked out of hatred it felt more like a steamroller. It is the difference between putting in effort and putting in energy. The more love you put in, the more you feel love.

It kept getting harder to work from that position of hatred – from effort and steamrolling. I was just pushing, pushing change. Everyone had the impression that I was a successful, strong, charismatic leader. But you know what? It wasn't true.

Ante took his charismatic leadership skills, left college and went to work in London for Diageo, a food and beverage firm. He was soon asked to go back to Croatia in 1997 as a regional manager. He came back to Croatia and the successful veneer started to crack. "I basically broke down," Ante says. "I never took the time to have a really deep relationship because people aren't perfect and I always wanted perfection. It was really, really hard."

He decided Diageo wasn't for him, so he went back to university to finish what he started there. He started doing consulting work as well. And he noticed that it wasn't enough. "I had trouble getting out of bed in the morning. At the end of the day I realized I had only done things to make money for other people."



He kept talking with his friends and colleagues from AIESEC and Pioneers of Change<sup>4</sup> about what was going on in Croatia and in the world. “I looked around and saw a lot of important things going on – but they were superficial – like giving people food, but not getting at the root of things.” In 1998 he and a few others started Horizon to “provide space for people to look more deeply and to harmonize.”

I wanted to do this because it is what I was missing the most. I was really a deep patriot and I was carrying a lot of hatred for the world and a lot of people. I was missing harmony with the world and more basically missing harmony with myself. Not being able to accept people for what they are – being imperfect. That was because I couldn’t accept myself as being imperfect. I just couldn’t accept that we’re all imperfect and that’s okay. We are the way we are, so just accept people the way they are and then work with them so they can become better. It’s not just a passive attitude of accepting people, or myself. I’m still working on this; it’s a process.

So Horizon came into being. Ante and the small team that started Horizon saw it as an NGO doing personal and organizational development work. Reflecting back he noted that

a lot of initiatives are connected with personal development. You know, at some other level, I was

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<sup>4</sup> Pioneers of Change is an emerging global learning community of committed, young people in their 20's and early 30's, from diverse cultural, social, and professional backgrounds. I and many of the young leaders in this dissertation are connected to Pioneers. See <http://www.pioneersofchange.net>

doing it very much for myself. I wanted to change the world because then I would be more happy with the world. I didn't like what it was.

But I'm shifting more and more. Now I'm doing it more for the feeling I get when I am meditating – things just flow. Like doing the right thing at the right time. Not really a rational thing, but like you are in a flow or a zone state when things just start happening. Being in harmony, or synchronized. That's when things just work out.

And he keeps doing it because it gives him energy; it feeds his curiosity for learning and increases love – “mine and other people's – starting with myself.” And Ante keeps moving towards a zone of feeling that one can almost taste.

What keeps me going is I don't worry about keeping going. I just let go. Whenever I start thinking about why am I doing this, I just get depressed. I think ‘if this is an abstract world what's the point?’ We humans have fouled up this whole world.

In many ways, Ante tries to stop thinking and to stay with the curiosity, the learning and the love.

When I am not centered, I feel like I am not being me. I'm being the Ante the leader role. The ironic thing is if we would all just be ourselves, what else would we need?

Ante has now moved on from Horizon. He's still present there as a leader and visionary, but he's gone on to another challenge. In the summer of 2003 he launched the Croma Business Academy (CBA), the first accredited business school in Croatia. CBA is based on appreciative inquiry, systems thinking

and leading from the heart. Towards the end of 2003, CBA evolved into another challenge for Ante. Croatian supporters of the school, looking for respectability and acceptance in mainstream Croatia, have pushed the school towards “normalcy.” Each step towards the mainstream meant bringing in people with the “right credentials” to lead a business school. Each time someone new was brought in, Ante found himself being asked to compromise more in terms of vision and values. In November 2003 he resigned, explaining to a truly stellar global advisory board he had personally recruited and formed, the reasons for his departure.

I have encouraged Ante to think of this as a time for the out-breath. A time of letting go and a time for him to stand in uncertainty without rushing on to the next project. My heart, love and support go out to him as he steps into the next chapter of his life.

Figure 2



*Cire Kane of Senegal*

Synapse Center – Synapse – <http://www.synapsecenter.org>

Cire Kane created the Synapse Learning Center in Dakar, Senegal to address the twin challenges of the future of its youth, and consequently the future of its society. The needs are palpable: in Senegal seven in ten children grow up below the poverty line, while youth under the age of 25 represent 58% of the population. Only one third of those who complete primary education can access secondary education, while only 20% of those who finish secondary school can access higher education. Even those who attend a university find that the educational system has not prepared them with the skills required for jobs.

In this context, Cire saw the unrealized potential embodied in vast numbers of young people who are unemployed, ignored, disillusioned and disenfranchised. Via conversations with peers, elders and friends, he concluded that young people are capable of defining problems and acting on them. In so doing, youth can develop their own creativity and skills, and take greater responsibility in their communities. Based on this idea, Cire set out to shift the local mindset from one that accepts youth as passive recipients to one that expects young people to be able doers. He created Synapse to empower youth and their initiatives, developing programs that advance creative and entrepreneurial leadership for social change that can benefit community, personal realization and global concerns. At present, this takes the form of education, youth employment, and community economic development in Senegal.

I first met Cire in December of 2000. For six weeks we had been in frequent communication, working through the details of getting a visa for him and then arranging his flight to our first Berkana Institute From the Four Directions practicum held mid-December in Devon in the south of England. I remember thinking how nervous Cire seemed while we were making all these

arrangements. It wasn't until much later that I learned this was to be his first trip out of Senegal.

Cire was one of the last to arrive in London for our bus ride south. He had not shown-up on his assigned flight and I remember searching for him, somewhat frantically, because Air France could find no record of his reservation. Then, I spotted him coming into the arrivals hall, looking almost as confused as I felt. It was then that I met Cire, this tall, sweet, beautifully smiling man who would touch my heart.

In our meeting in England, Cire was often quiet. He is a quiet man who learned his tribal language first, French second and then English. When he would speak in our gathering, the room would become very quiet -- the things he said would catch everyone's attention.

Seven months later Cire was one of those who sat in the first circle at Castle Borl that talked about learning centres. He shared the idea that was beginning to grow within him for a centre to help youth in Senegal. One of the main things he was concerned about was youth employment.

Almost no one is hired for jobs in Senegal. Every year statistics show about 6,000 people hired – but every year there are 100,000 new job seekers, with 40% of the total unemployed being youth.

Fifty-eight percent of our population is young people. They are having difficulties. They are always waiting for help from the government. We have been a colonized country and people have become used to asking the government for help. But we are now an independent country and we have to do it ourselves – and I know that we can do it.

We are facing a lot of challenges – poverty, youth employment, literacy. No one is looking at the length of the challenge. We need to bring consciousness to the young people who are not thinking about the future of the society. And if they are going to raise a family in this country, they are going to have to think about the conditions in which we are living. Maybe we will be the generation which does not have a means to live, which will face a lot of problems. But perhaps after us, the situation can change.

Cire's consciousness was shaped in many ways by his family. They were well off by local standards, living in Diagnoum, a village 487 kilometers outside of Dakar, when Cire was growing up. One of the things he remembers most was the time the entire region around his village was hit by a devastating flood. His father's response was immediate.

He decided we had to sell our house and everything we had and help the people in the region. My father is retired and not very rich now, because he has given what he has to help others. At times my brothers and I have not understood why. But more and more now, I am understanding. Now, many relatives come and tell us that they would not be having the life they are living without the help from my parents. From them I gained the courage to volunteer for my country.

We live in community; we cannot take ourselves out of community. I had a lot of opportunities in my life; I have a lot of chance to make a difference in my country. So I have decided myself to change the

situation. I have got a lot of courage from my father and from my parents.

A 28-year-old former classmate and friend of Cire's became the Minister of Youth two years ago when the political party that had been in power for 40 years was ousted.

Young people had the majority and wanted change. The new government is helping young people have hope in the future. Our elders are beginning to believe in youth capacity to change things – this is very important and motivating for young people. Step by step, small steps by small steps, we are changing the traditional beliefs of our elders.

But many of these young people are just waiting for help from the new government. They have the responsibility to build their own future is something we are telling them. Lots of young people have appetite to change this situation. Perhaps by having small results they are more motivated to continue in this work. They are seeing the possibilities for a brighter future. If these young people aren't helped to change the situation, they will no longer believe in their capacity to change the situation. This consciousness could be very bad for the country if they fail – at this moment we have a lot of work to do to help these young people succeed in this work.

And Cire is one of those doing that work. Unlike many of his contemporaries who took their master's degrees and moved to France or the United States, Cire feels a deep commitment to stay and work in Senegal.

The choice I have made is a good choice. If I leave, a lot of others will leave now. A lot of people who have told us they will come back after one or two years do not. So, I do not think it is the right thing to do. My



friends tell me 'I have seen you go abroad and have lots of opportunities to be elsewhere, and you come back here and don't stay there. I will do the same. I will stay here and work with you. I will not take this opportunity to move to France. I will stay here and struggle with you.

Cire's work to build Synapse has been supported by a culture of connections.

I have a wonderful team, a community of very driven people, walking side by side with me. We are walking the path that appears before us, day by day, month by month, and we believe that ultimately our steps will come together with others in a body of work that is recognized by our community as inspired and worthy.

Though in my odyssey, I had several times strange feelings, feeling at the same time lost and driven. Feeling lost and still finding my way. Experiencing lots of ups and downs but still staying engaged. During these moments, natural life crossroads, every chance that I had to talk or meet with my mentors and friends to share stories, to feel their courage, to touch their commitments, to feel their compassionate understanding was for me an opportunity to be energized again and to touch the future. Acting faithfully with that careful consideration in mind, I feel encouraged, supported and less alone. (Cire, personal communication, January 20, 2004)

The support Cire feels from his family and friends is augmented by the support and connection he feels from others out in the world, from Pioneers of Change and from The Berkana Institute.

Help from you, Bob, and from Meg has been critical. If I did not receive it, I would not be able to continue to do this work. A lot of people here do not have the courage to continue the work; the support from you

and from other people all over the world is critical. And when sometime I go online and see some e-mails, I gain a lot of courage and come back to my work and show hope to the people I am working with. Sometimes they don't understand where I take this energy from – I believe this courage and this hope come to me because I have a broad community.

In an online collaboration and support space, Cire wrote that

it was gratifying to read Marianne's journal this morning and to feel a deep and soft connection with what is happening in Zimbabwe. That awakened in me that no effort is too great to give the best possible service to people. It's true in Senegal, in Africa, maybe also everywhere in the world, it's hard to get something new to emerge...but to make the dream a reality, one must have firm resolve, persistence, tenacity. And in this place, I will never fail to find courage, inspiration and guidance in your stories and constructive achievement. (Cire, online conference, March 1, 2002)

Reflecting back on his work, Cire cites two key values which keep him grounded:

respect of human dignity – whoever the person is. What is underlying the behaviour of a lot of people now is that they feel they are not respected as human beings. We have a community where everyone is respected.

The value of communication. You never fear from one you know. By being together and working together we are creating a family beyond the community. This power of communication is very important because it has helped in building the community we are living in. Some people think they are living in their poor condition and they think it is because of the rich people.

By just being more connected they will understand it is not true. People are not trying to change their situation – they just relate to the global

exchange and say there is nothing they can do. I think if people of the north can show to these people living in the south or in the poorest communities that while they create problems, but they are still here to help and to understand the situation they are in.

The work you and Meg are doing is very helpful in beginning to build this relationship in the world. If people here learn that people of the west are not who they think they are – it will make a big difference.

Over the last two years Synapse has been emerging from Cire's work. He offered me two short stories of how Synapse is helping others.

For example, there are young people who have never been to school, and we have been doing vocational training outside of schools. We had this young person who has been working for 10-15 years, and being exploited. He came to us and we told him he has experience and capacity. "What if we help you gain some loans?" I put him in contact with a friend who was able to give some small loans -- \$300 - \$1000. We helped him write the business plan and he got the loan and he has brought all the young people who were working in the place where he was working and they have shown to other young people they can also do something like this and they can succeed. Now he believes he can change his own future.

Another example came from the country.

In a three month rainy season they have to create what they will live with for the rest of the year. But they often sell everything when they can – and that means the supply is greater than the demand. And they get very little money. We put another person in touch with someone who works with cultivator to grow his tomatoes, and can them, so they are preserved and he can sell them during the dry season when the price is very high.

These small stories we are having keep us going forward in our work. But we haven't given money to people, materials to people. We have just been counseling and building relationships between these people and others who can help them.

Another example is our new Education Against Exclusion Project. Childhood is often synonymous with parent love, family protection, the joy of discovering things, play activities, initiation into a harmonious social life and education. But to a growing number of Talibes<sup>5</sup> all over Senegal, this time of life is no more than a sad and dark moment. We are confronted with the ever-growing phenomenon of children suffering hardships, which is reaching alarming proportions, especially in Dakar. Most of them resort to begging and to early working and thus expose themselves to various forms of exploitation.

Education Against Exclusion aims to, on the one hand, meet as directly and as concretely as possible basic-educational and vital needs of Talibes and on the other, to promote community and youth investment in the fight against the marginalization of Talibes.

We focus on providing education and mobilizing community and youth organizations to save Talibes

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<sup>5</sup> The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) reported recently that (UNICEF, 2002),

There are between 50,000 and 100,000 "talibes" in Senegal. Traditionally, families contracted with marabouts to raise their children – who are called talibes – and provide them with a Koranic education. In exchange for this education, the families would provide compensation or gifts to the marabouts, and the children would be engaged in farming or other enterprises to support the marabouts. The children would also go house to house in their villages reciting the Koran, receiving donations along the way.

Today, more and more marabouts take children out of the desert villages and bring them into the cities where the marabouts can make a better living. Nine out of 10 talibes are from the villages, and 85% are from the poorest families. A single marabout may have between 20 and several hundred talibes in his "care," depending on his reputation.

from the streets of Dakar, especially those coming from the Daaras (traditional spaces where children learn the Qoran) or living in the street. These children spend most of their time begging in the street to sustain their Serignes' (Qoran teachers) families and live in dirt poor and deprived suburban enclaves. They have no schooling and they are in the shadow of drugs, diseases, delinquency, violence and street gangs. They are very often excluded from their families and communities while they should be part of their futures. And their numbers are growing. Among the causes of Talibes' existence are the breakdown of the family, the economic crisis, the rural migration... Poverty causes a vicious circle of neglect in these areas, with parents too exhausted in just trying to survive to take proper care of their children, preferring to place them in Daaras where they are reduced to begging to live. (Cire, online conference, June 5, 2002)

When Cire was sharing his story with me, he went on to say that

parents go downtown in the early morning to find jobs and are gone all day. And the children go out in the street and beg and things. Now, we are working with them to read and write and take care of personal cleaning. Parents come to us and say 'I have not had the possibility to help my child and educate him. I have had nightmares at night about him being killed in the streets. But because you are helping him, I can see that he can have a better life, a brighter future – I am here to thank you, and I am here to pray for you and that your project may last so you can help many other children.

I asked Cire if he could imagine doing anything else. His response was clear.

A lot of people believe in me now. A lot of people believe in Synapse now. We cannot take the responsibility to do anything else. We cannot destroy this hope we have created in people's lives – we have to keep doing it. I don't see anything else I can do if I leave this work now. Sometimes I just wonder about my life and my future, and I just wonder about my future. And I wonder. I don't think about being married now, sometimes I can't pay my rent. Perhaps step by step we can arrive at a level where we can sustain ourselves. This possibility keeps us going ahead.

Figure 3



*Manish Jain of India*

Shikshantar – <http://www.swaraj.org/shikshantar/>

Manish Jain created Shikshantar in late 1998 with the goal of catalyzing a movement to rethink and transform education and development in India, based upon the classic principles of *swaraj* or rule-over-the-self. The organization has many facets, operating as an applied research institution, library, community activity center, retreat space, and publishing house. Shikshantar seeks to change the existing ‘culture of schooling,’ characterized by competition, controls, fear, compulsion, homogenization and standardization. Shikshantar believes these elements disempower and dehumanize students, generating conformity, obedience and apathy. This breeds unthinking consumers, unlikely to question existing systems, and unaware of their potential to shape their own well-being and that of their communities. As such, change begins with ‘unlearning’ to deprogram preconditioned mindsets or

assumptions, while empowering people to reclaim control over their learning and visions of success. This thinking is based upon ideas put forth by many thinkers over several decades, dating back to India's struggle for freedom. *Vimukt Shiksha* means liberating learning. Shikshantar has set out to liberate learning from the walls of schooling, and discover what kinds of learning spaces/opportunities do in fact help to liberate the potentials of people. To this end, they have been developing an experiment called Udaipur as a Learning City.

We were in the Johannesburg Airport when I first met Manish. A group of people were gathering for a *From the Four Directions* practicum bringing together people mostly from Africa and Europe. Manish had recently published an article by Meg Wheatley in one of the journals issued periodically by Shikshantar. I had no idea who he was.

At this third practicum in five months, we had the "official" sessions during the day. The next to last night of the five day practicum, I realized that the deeper and more interesting conversations were taking place late into the night as Manish gathered with young leaders from across Africa to talk about what was really going on in the world!



Manish's parents were born in India, but chose to spend their adult lives in the United States. They were professionals and expected their children to strive for the same kind of excellence which had brought them to America. Manish grew up in Chicago. When asked about his hopes for the future in the sixth grade, Manish's response was that he wanted to grow up and become a lawyer and then Prime Minister of India.

The movie Gandhi came out when Manish was in the 8th grade and it was a tremendous source of inspiration for his emerging sense of being Indian. It was also the time when he had the greatest number of boyhood fights. Others from his school and neighborhood were angered that Gandhi was more popular than another film that came out the same year – E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial – and they took their ire out on Manish. Their racist response to him pushed him into his own exploration of what it meant to be Indian.

His parents hoped he would go to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and were disappointed when he chose Brown instead. Manish was following a different call. He didn't exactly know what it was, but he knew that his definition of success was different than his parents – he wasn't going to become a doctor or an engineer.

At Brown, Manish became very involved in politics on campus, being very interested in working on race, class and social issues. He became vice-president of his university student body and, as a result, gave up his childhood dream of entering mainstream politics. He ended up moving, academically, towards business. His sense was he could do this under the larger framework of economic development, which would be really important for India and other developing countries. This was also a way to keep the pressure off from his parents. He quickly found himself in two worlds – spending 30-40 hours a week as a campus activist and, at the same time, doing internships at Merrill Lynch and the Federal Reserve Bank.

After graduation, Manish went to work for Morgan-Stanley on Wall Street so he would “have a set of skills to be able to converse with those who held economic power.” But what he saw was that the whole world of finance is just “managed and manipulated. It was all just playing around with numbers – no real consideration of people or communities.” Manish went on to say that

this was like really crazy. I saw the decadence of the early 1990s – it was like a Monopoly Game. I was staying in five star hotels and flying on the Concorde and spending a couple of thousand dollars on dinner – and I was 21, 22 years old. The first six months were

exciting – and then it got boring. I saw the directors and heard what they talked about. It was really meaningless – self-made lies and illusions; a bunch of crap. I began to wonder, ‘Is this really good for people?’

It became a difficult time of differentiation for Manish.

“When I started wanting to reconnect to my Indian roots and various social concerns, others around me started to react negatively – ‘oh, you think you’re too good for us, you don’t want to go out partying now.’” But he followed that call and it led him out of Wall Street and to California where he connected with people working in the field of education. That, in turn, took him to Harvard where he earned an masters degree in education.

After Harvard, he started working with United States Agency for International Development (USAID) United Nations Children’s fund (UNICEF) and the World Bank. He was still in his mid-twenties and being asked to give advice to ministers in many countries around the world.

The whole development thing started to look really fishy – there’s all this money coming in in the form of loans, but it is all going for consultants. Or if it is USAID, then only American products are being bought. And everything has to serve American foreign policy interests.

What’s more, the whole idea of the expert began to break down. Not only did Manish know how little he actually knew, he

had experiences that disillusioned him. While designing an educational project in Ethiopia, for example, other consultants would come in and have their reports completed in one day. He called them “search and replace reports -- same words, different country names.” What he saw was that his colleagues “lacked a willingness to really try to listen, to understand the context and to see what people actually wanted or needed. They looked at the local people from a deficit perspective and themselves as saviors. It was really disgusting.”

An opportunity came along to do some work with the government in India on a research project. The project was headed by disconnected people, sitting in their offices in Delhi, completely cut off from the rest of the country. Many times, Manish would just show up in a village he was supposed to visit, without telling them he was coming in order to avoid the official ceremonies. He started to see totally different things once he was no longer the official.

An opportunity emerged to go to work for United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to develop a new flagship project called Learning Without Frontiers and Manish felt it would be the right fit. Manish recalls that

at the time I thought I still needed some big institution to articulate myself through. The UNESCO thing was interesting on many different levels. Things being

done in our team were perceived to be threatening to people inside of UNESCO. Older people at UNESCO felt it wasn't right for younger people to question them. It was a really different reception than when I was in my early twenties and the expert flying around the world on the Concorde.

I started having questions about UNESCO and how it worked. A handful of countries blatantly dictated to the rest – in spite of the pretence of democracy. They wanted to keep the current world order in place. They were afraid of change.

UNSECO said its primary role was to serve the interests of the member states (and consequently their bureaucrats and politicians). Manish disagreed. He thought it was to serve the interests of humanity. The Learning Without Frontiers project sought to support the world of learning beyond the boundaries of formal schools. It had started with a strong recognition of the diverse creativities, knowledge systems, relationships and learning processes that existed in local communities. Manish concluded he could do that work better outside UNESCO than within in. Ultimately he left.

In his moves through these various positions of power and prestige, one of Manish's core assumptions is that there ought to be fairness and justice in the world.

This whole school-tracking thing, for example. One of my 8th grade teachers didn't like me, and so in 9th grade, I got put into regular, rather than honors classes. Breezing through – with teachers saying 'You don't belong there,' made me think about all the

others who did not really belong there. My 10th grade teacher told my class 'My job is to weed people out'. He actually told us that. What the hell? How can you treat people like this?

Manish found such questions of fairness, all the time, in different places. He started from within the system trying to change it.

But the place where I derived personal power was not because I had a degree from Harvard. So I needed to create a different place of integrity that I can work from. I saw that people can do a little bit within those systems – but they don't want to fundamentally change their own lives. Who do I want to connect with? Maybe I want to connect more with those people outside the system – those we call "losers". How can I do that from a position of power? It just didn't feel right anymore. When I was in college and after college I was a very dominating person. I had a sharpness and a lot of self-confidence. Everyone was afraid of me – and I never really liked that. Doing things very fast, generating new things. I remember thinking, 'I don't want to have this kind of dominating power where people feel afraid of me.' People would start crying – and I didn't really like that. People pay money for credentials so they can get to dominate and intimidate other. Throwing around your degrees and titles and all that. People throwing their whole lives away just to stay on top at Morgan Stanley. I got to be on top when I was really young – and saw how hollow it was. And saw how that whole system is destroying the planet and destroying people's lives.

Manish wanted to find a different way into India. During this time he met the woman who would become his wife, Vidhi. She too had done a lot of grassroots development work and was not satisfied with it. They said "Let's talk about where we can do

this work, where we are grounded. Let's use our heads and come up with a new approach.”

He began to spend more time with his grandmother in India, and she was a source of inspiration for him.

My grandmother never went to school, but had a tremendous amount of caring and love and memory about people and valuing of each relationship. She could create beautiful songs off the top of her head -- all of these things that are important for regenerating family and community. From what I had studied at Harvard and UNESCO, she was the “stupid” one; she was the “problem” that needed to be “fixed” and “educated”. But the love, the caring, the honesty and the integrity – I don't see any of that on Wall Street or at Harvard or at UNESCO – so the question of who is really “educated” and who is “uneducated” kept pounding me.

Manish had engaged in three of the major power centers of the world – Wall Street, Harvard, and then the United Nations. And he started to learn that being with his grandmother, in an Indian village, took him to a “different source of power, knowing and wisdom that these three power centers didn't have.”

Shikshantar started to be born. Manish, his wife Vidhi and his sister, Shilpa, and close friend Wasif from Pakistan were the midwives. Shikshantar is dedicated to working with those individuals who want to reclaim control over their own learning. They are interested in nurturing diverse spaces of power outside of the framework of the Nation-State or the Market Economy. Their

philosophy of learning is based on many of the values they found in the very fabric of India. Two key values were *anekantvad* and *aparigraha*.

*Anekantvad* holds that there are multiplicities of perspectives on the truth. “This idea encourages us to see our selves as continuous seekers. Part of our life journey is to understand these different perspectives.” In the organizations he worked with in his twenties, Manish kept discovering that

we never have the truth and a lot of these institutions were walking around trying say, ‘We have the truth.’ And that really got my goat. You may have the truth for yourself, maybe, but to say you have the truth for a couple of billion other people...Anekantvad reminds us to keep a sense of humility about ourselves.

*Aparigraha* means non-possessiveness or non-ownership.

This idea discourages us from being hoarders and challenges the notion that we 'own' things such as knowledge, land, etc. It also pushes us to question the belief that we are superior or inferior to others, or to other forms of life. It promotes a sense of nonattachment. All of this material stuff doesn't really matter. And so here's the value of simplicity and the power of simplicity compared to this ugly ostentatiousness of Wall Street.

*Aparigraha* is not to be imposed by an outside expert. It develops from a deep connection to the wisdom within and involves self-discipline and consciously setting one's own limits.



Work in the early years was financed out of savings but now they, too, are looking for new ways to support their work in the world. They have done their grassroots work and gradually interconnected with a world of people holding similar values in India and in the rest of the world.

Recently I had an opportunity to read a proposal Manish and his sister Shilpa had written for funding a retreat to bring many of their peers together for intensive reflection and learning with each other. It offers an excellent summary for why Shikshantar exists and why Manish has chosen this life.

Today, South Asia, like much of the rest of the world, finds itself mired in serious crises -- from the familiar threat of nuclear war to the imminent threat of water wars, from the neo-colonialism of the global market economy to the mental colonialism of an antiquated education system. Ecological, economic, political, social, psychological and spiritual challenges feel overwhelming in their scale, pace and intensity of growth.

Yet, simultaneously, movements are emerging. Neither planned nor controlled, and therefore, neither monolithic nor predictable, these movements are launching critical questions about the who, what, whys and hows of the crises before them. In dynamic and organic ways, they are also seeking out different possibilities. Determined not to be trapped in the either-or framework (i.e., "either capitalism or socialism," "either democracy or dictatorship," "either state or market,") these movements draw upon the best of human imagination and innovation. They ground themselves in diverse languages, cultures, knowledge and wisdom traditions, and flower new processes, experiences and dreams.

What such movements share is a deep understanding that systemic change is intertwined with self-change and relational-change; each cannot be explored without the others. Similarly, thinking, practicing, questioning, and doing are inherently linked. How do our experiences shape our thoughts, how do our feelings influence our actions, and so on, are regularly considered by these individuals and groups. In doing so, they challenge not only the illusion of Cartesian rationality, but also the dominant myth that professionals and institutions can (and should) govern human life. Rather spaces are created for appreciating the complexity of human nature and the power of the human spirit. (Jain, 2003)

Figure 4



*Marianne Knuth of Zimbabwe*

Kufunda Learning Village – <http://www.kufunda.org>

Marianne Knuth founded the Kufunda learning initiative on a 327-acre farm in Ruwa, Zimbabwe in 2002. Half Danish and half Zimbabwean, Marianne saw how experiences and opportunities (or the lack thereof) affect people's view of what is possible. Witnessing the potential of many bright, capable people constrained by both material limitations and the lack of perceived alternatives, Marianne felt inspired to try to help break the cycle of poverty. Kufunda works toward development of self-reliant communities, by supporting creativity and self-reliance among the people of those communities, starting with the belief that people

already embody both of those qualities, if they can access that knowledge and find the confidence to act on it. Kufunda is also an exploration of whole and meaningful living. Marianne's own desire to live in a balanced and life-affirming way, in touch with nature, with time for body and spirit, shaped her design of the Kufunda learning community. At Kufunda, residents explore alternative ways of being together. Programs are also rooted in the intent that participants return to apply their learning in their communities, as opposed to leaving for the city. Marianne hopes that Kufunda may unearth African wisdom and insights, such as the art of simplicity, that can help people in many parts of the world return to more nourishing and sustainable living. The first 3-month program in residence was launched with 15 youth in July 2002.

I first met Marianne in the summer of 2000 at a small meeting in Sundance, Utah. Some colleagues and I needed someone to serve as a regional coordinator for Africa for a new Initiative – From the Four Directions: People Everywhere Leading the Way. One colleague had known Marianne for several years. Born of a Zimbabwean mother and a Danish father, Marianne had grown up mostly in Europe, with brief periods of residence in Zimbabwe.

When I was collecting her story in the winter of 2003, Marianne told me about the World Social Forum -- a global conference on poverty and social issues that she participated in the mid-nineties.

People from all over the world, citizens from other countries came and spent a week exploring. I really enjoyed engaging with something that was so beyond myself. We did a lot of reacting to things we saw in the system and expressed what we saw about the whole process. Sometimes we stayed up all night and wrote leaflets and distributed them the next day. There was a real fire that was burning – and it was very exciting.

Marianne described going off to Sri Lanka after this meeting. She stayed next door to a Buddhist temple, and knowing nothing about Buddhism, she was attracted to the calm energy of the temple.

I reached out to the books that stood out at the temple and bought them and started reading on the Sri Lanka beaches. I started to trust my instincts and let things come through me.

Marianne says that this time in the temple, and on the Sri Lanka beaches was when her spiritual self started to awaken. She began to listen to those inner voices for guidance in her life.

Marianne decided that when she returned to her university in Denmark, she wanted to bring a greater awareness of social issues and concerns into AIESEC-Denmark. Like others I have

included in this dissertation, Marianne was an active member of AIESEC. Awareness of social issues and concerns was, she discovered, present in AIESEC chapters in other countries, but missing in Denmark. Her work in Denmark, in turn, led her to decide to run for President of AIESEC International.

Marianne, who would become the first woman president of AIESEC, decided then that she wanted to turn AIESEC around and to shift its focus from business to more of an emphasis on social issues. Marianne described how she at first made logical, strategic, intellectual speeches when she began to campaign for the presidency of AIESEC International. They were a total disaster. In her last speech, she let that calmness first experienced in the Sri Lank temple center her. “An inner voice said ‘let all that go – just speak from the heart about why I want this position and what I want to do.’” The delegates loved what she said and she was elected!

One day, while Marianne was president of AIESEC, she was visited by Oscar Motomura, a Brazilian businessman she had met at global gatherings in Brazil and Turkey. Marianne related how Oscar

had inspired my presidency greatly, but was never in touch. I was therefore surprised when I received a call from his secretary to set up a meeting for the two of us

in Bruxelles (the location of the AIESEC international headquarters.) He was in Europe for a trip but the stop in Bruxelles was specifically to have the conversation around what happened to old AIESECers when they entered the real world. There was a lot of resonance between the two of us and we agreed to spend time over the coming months to explore how we might support young people in making the transition to the 'real world' without losing touch with their values, creativity and ideals. Margareta Barchan joined us. We hosted two global gatherings over the following year (one in Brazil and one in Sweden.) Mille and Colleen participated in one each, and a year later Oscar and Margareta committed funds to support the three of us in giving birth to Pioneers of Change. (Marianne, personal communication, December 4, 2003)

Marianne and two close colleagues – Mille Bojer and Colleen Bowker – came together to co-create Pioneers of Change, a global network which links people in their 20s and 30s so they can support each other in living their lives in integrity with their values.

Mille, Colleen and Marianne started to feel what Marianne describes as a field of energy about them. They spent almost a full year talking amongst themselves and with others to develop the core identity and principles of Pioneers. This network is a whole story of its own which I will not describe here – but it is a powerful example of how people can be drawn to a field of possibilities.

After a half dozen years of global networking and organizing with AIESEC and then Pioneers of Change, Marianne started

noticing how sensitive she felt around Africa and how she was feeling called to begin local work there. “I sometimes felt naïve and superficial -- like I don’t have anything to offer. But I just knew, very, very deeply, that this was what I needed to do.” In the second day of a ten day Vispassna meditation where she had no paper and wasn’t supposed to be attached to anything, the visions of work in Africa just kept coming. Finally Marianne said to herself

screw it! And I just let the images for going back to Zimbabwe rip through me. On Day Nine, when I could get pen and paper, I just sat down and wrote out the whole mind map that had come to me. The space was already there for a greater sense of who I am and what I wanted to happen. My inner voice kept saying ‘you get out of the way.’ I kept tuning into how strongly I reacted to certain conversations about Africa – and I kept following them.

Marianne’s sense was that whatever she did, she couldn’t “go completely wrong. I’m just going to go back home and make something of this that just wants to happen.” She had support from a wide range of people, including me and the Berkana Institute and she knew she would have the support of her mother and uncles and aunts in bringing something alive at their family farm outside of Harare. Her deep sense was that she needed to keep it simple and to allow for co-creation. This wasn’t about her alone; it was about something that was trying to be born with and through her. It “wasn’t so much that we must all have this single



vision – not one truth dominating all – but that I needed to invite in many ways of seeing and being.”

Marianne returned to Zimbabwe in late 2001 and the village started to be born. This theme of co-creation continued. Marianne realized that

we, the facilitators, will develop our skills to also use them in our everyday work, but mostly we need to continue and deepen our conversations and connections among each other. These gatherings are seeds for the important work that is calling to be done. (Marianne journal, October 8, 2001)

In 2002 Zimbabwe was in the midst of an intense political battle for the presidency. The current regime, which had been in power since 1986, was seen by many as corrupt and failing. Held at a distance by much of the international community, Zimbabwe was continuing to fragment from within. The country, once a breadbasket for much of Africa, was facing famine, combined with major hard currency and oil shortages. In the midst of all this, Kufunda Learning Village was being born. Kufunda – which means learning in Shona, the native language of the Zimbabwe people near Harare – was coming into existence while all pretense that Zimbabwe could and should be like Western industrialized nations was being stripped away. I recall many conversations with Marianne when she talked about the power of returning to

something more primal, something rooted in Zimbabwe, rather than aspiring to be like the West.

It was a hard journey with many demands. Marianne had to learn how to supervise workers who were building the village. She had to learn how to be in day-to-day relationship with her mother who was a ranking member of Mugawbe's government. She needed to figure out what the core of the learning program was and she needed to invite in the first cohort.

As I am trying to create something that isn't yet, I need to stand up straight, tirelessly, ever faithful to my vision, which isn't really mine alone, but one which I have been blessed with receiving by the universe – whatever that means. To be strong and effective and at the same time to be soft and vulnerable and open to magic, those two are turning out to be a little more difficult than I thought. I actually have no idea why I am crying. I believe that sometimes my tears are a sign of connection to truth. Perhaps that is what this is. A remembrance. Neither sad nor happy, or both sad and happy. I suppose I am thankful that I am not just going forward mindlessly, and that I am being helped to remember who I am, who I want to be, and I simply need to keep working at living out that person in my everyday actions and interactions, that girl whom I love so. (Marianne journal, March 6, 2002)

The work continued, and Kufunda was built with love and faith and vision. As Kufunda moved into its first learning program Marianne wrote in another of her journal entries

I felt last night that it couldn't fail. I felt last night full of courage and confidence. I felt last night so very

connected to the love I have for this initiative, and the bigger work it is a part of, and I sensed that that alone is going to carry us through. That love is not about me, it is not even me. It is the stuff of the universe, flowing through me, manifesting through me this wonderful gift that Kufunda already is. (Marianne journal, June 27, 2002)

One of the things that sustained her was her deep spirituality. In one of her journals she wrote that

in Buddhism we learn - and I think I have returned to where this journal started - that things are never the same; that they are ever changing. We learn that that is the nature of life - and so it makes little sense to cling to one experience, or one emotion. There is joy and there is pain, there is suffering, and there is bliss; there is anger and there is love - and the practice is to learn to be with all of them just the same, to simply sit with them, and watch them, and accept them. Easier said than done of course, and in this day there have been moments of not sitting with them in a detached manner, but sinking right into them - and then there have been other moments of being aware of what is going on, and consciously trying and learning to breathe my way through it all, simply being with what is. (Marianne journal, July 25, 2002)

Rich learnings were harvested from the first experience.

We realized last month that much of what we have let go of from the past is the communalism. The cooperative spirit and nature of our communities and relationships. And that individualism, materialism, competitiveness have crowded out many beautiful and beneficial habits and practices of the past, and of the culture. But this is what we have now. We can't cry for the past. We can look ahead and try to figure out, and plan and experiment with ways of bringing more cooperative practices to life, ones relevant to this time,

and to our situation and context. (Marianne journal, August 18, 2002)

One of the women standing closely with Marianne as Kufunda evolved was Bev, a white Zimbabwean woman whose husband, farm and way of life were under attack by the Mugawbe supported militias that were taking over white farms. Bev offered this wonderful poem as Kufunda came into being.

The planet has turned,  
the thrush has changed her song  
the days grow longer  
hotter  
drier

This is not a comfortable season  
it is what comes before the yet distant rains.

The Kufunda community has traveled a long  
journey  
From defining themselves from a place of poverty  
they have begun to claim their wealth

They have made soap, and body lotion  
made compost and permaculture  
painted their rooms  
polished their floors  
welded hangers  
made tables  
cooked  
made fires  
written their stories  
brought water from the well  
sung, danced,  
played drums, and mbiras and marimbas

They have moved from looking at themselves  
to looking at their communities

to looking at their traditional cultures  
and back to themselves.

And Bev added this note to the poem:

An unusual collection of people - our ages 17-54  
(including facilitators.) Mostly people from  
backgrounds radically different from my privileged life.  
People whom I am coming to appreciate and admire.  
And I am beginning to have a sense of hope for where  
we might go on our journey into the future - though I  
still have moments of doubt. The two co-exist - the  
hope and the doubt. (Marianne journal, August 20,  
2002)

As Marianne began her reflections on what had been learned  
with the first cohort, the harvest was rich. I want to share one  
whole section here.

When I arrived in Zimbabwe last year to start  
Kufunda, I already had experience in bringing groups  
together for co-creative and mutually supportive  
experiences and yet I am learning so much more about  
the power of community here with this group of people  
who have become the first students of Kufunda.

I am learning that we really can't do it on our  
own. We need each other, and we need the practices  
and the habits of continuing to strengthen the  
membrane of our togetherness.

We meet daily in a morning circle. As often as it  
is a real rejuvenation - coming together in the circle -  
just as often it is just really ordinary. It is this co-  
existence of the ordinary, yet steady, community  
building that creates the space for the extraordinary to  
occur, which is one of my biggest learnings of this  
time.

It is about each person and it is about the  
whole. We each need the support and nourishment of  
the group to help us bring out our talents, our gifts,

our shine and sparkle, and as we do we strengthen and enliven the whole.

Spirit is here too. Through the circle, and through the music and dance, spirit has entered our lives at Kufunda in an important way. I introduced a moment of silence each morning at the beginning of our morning check in. We use a bell to start and end the moment of silence. The students have taken over the roles of being the bell keeper, and by now we often sit for as long as 10 minutes before the bell keeper of the day rings us out of the silence to the morning check in. Time to reconnect, to be alone with self, time to be together without words. I didn't anticipate that they would want to stay with silence for so long, but we are. (Marianne journal, September 19, 2002)

Marianne's work at Kufunda has continued since the first year. Kufunda continues to evolve and emerge. Some people who were part of the first cohort have returned and settled in the learning village, building more spaces for people.

Marianne's own commitment and vision continue to grow. She is one of my heroes and is an inspiration to all who are involved in this work. Her observations in a recent spring journal entry capture some of the essence of her learning and vision.

Today I am ablaze with energy. Actually ablaze. I have so much energy for what we are doing now and over the next week, and for the new ideas of the plans for the months to come. We are working hard, and concentrating intensely on the process and the people – trying to serve them as best we might – and yet I am left replenished everyday - though by midday I am usually suddenly completely exhausted and ready to sleep, with all we have done and given over the morning – and then somehow by the end of the day, the feeling that persists is one of a lot of life, vitality

and drive. A desire to go further, do more, plunge into the depths together with these people.

I feel like we are entering important landscapes where we haven't been before. Though they continue to desire practical skills (and we are providing them), we have also entered an arena of joint inquiry. In a small way as yet, but it is an important step. In some ways we are leaving the facilitator/workshop host role behind and are engaging with them as partners in an inquiry around community that each of us holds very dear. How can I not be fired up? This is what my life is about – deep meetings of people.

Deeply meaningful conversations and explorations. I know it from before. Nothing can get me more excited than that. And here we are in the middle of that fire and I am loving it, and I am alive like I haven't been for awhile – and that is not to say that the recent past has been uninteresting or unsatisfactory (though it definitely has had its hard moments.)

I love the youth programmes, and yet I have a strong sense about these community organiser programmes. Ana and I have decided to host a 'follow up' workshop in November before she leaves where we invite both this group and the group which was here in February (when Sera was here) for a part two in our conversation.

Conversation sounds like it is no work, no real stuff coming out on the other end. But I think we are seeking a shift in understanding – engaged in a search for buttons we might press that could make a significant impact. And perhaps I am feeling this more than most of them, but I know that there are others with us who feel like a new door is being opened, even if they don't quite understand it.

And as is always the case when I enter this space that I am in right now – I also become more open to nature. I am in love with our mornings (6:30 we start with yoga and now the 12 yoga mats are no longer enough for all of us). The sun rises at around 5:30, but there is still a lingering sense of the early morning at yoga time, dew on the grass, and a

coolness in the air still. Birds – so many birds singing, and then gradually the day progresses, till we reach my other favourite time of the day: 5 pm when the sun is hanging low but not quite setting. The golden light is quite unique I think. I never experienced it in Europe, and I have never been in a place to really notice it in South Africa.

Everything changes – how often we forget it. I am more aware this time of the transience of this wonderful experience, and yet I am SO enjoying it, and feeling so blessed. I am so reminded why I chose this path. And I have more hope once again for Zimbabwe – partly also by seeing it/us through Ana's eyes. I am seeing a country that has a lot of wealth, even if it is not financial. The people. Ah yes, the people.  
(Marianne journal, September 18, 2002)



Figure 5



*Tim Merry of the Netherlands*

Engage!InterAct – <http://www.engage.nu>

Tim Merry, Peter Merry and Arjen Bos founded Engage!InterAct in Holland in July 2001 as a training organization dedicated to the appreciation of diversity and furtherance of the values of respect, cooperation and creativity. Participants take responsibility for their learning. Programs promote critical thinking, open-mindedness and decisiveness, in hopes of achieving a successful multi-cultural society, active and democratic citizenship, and self-empowering knowledge society. In the context of our increasingly complex modern society, Engage!InterAct has

focused on three primary challenges: working with multi-culturalism and diversity; defining citizenship with active participation; and navigating the choices of the information age as a knowledge society. Engage!InterAct approaches these challenges with Open Source Learning (OSL), a paradigm which Engage!InterAct has developed based on its work and other learning in the field. OSL works towards relationships that embody partnership, openness and transformation, and employ critical thinking and clear situational perception to guide thought and action. In short, Engage!InterAct believes we can all contribute to our well-being through respectful and understanding interactions. The organization promotes active engagement in creative cooperation, self-awareness and a sense of connection within the natural world.

I met Tim at our first From the Four Directions retreat at Hazelwood House in England in December of 2000. It was cold and wet and dreary for most of that week. But I will always recall a session in the chapel on the Hazelwood House grounds where this young man gathered us in a circle and started teaching us how to move. With an energetic voice, he taught us to “pass the clap” from one hand to the next, all around the circle. Hands from all around the world.

Tim's path and mine have crossed many times over the last three years. He's like the younger brother I never had and he inspires me with his energy, commitment, insight and vigor.

An Englishman who chooses now to live in The Netherlands and may soon return to his birthplace in Nova Scotia, Tim is a man of many cultures. He grew up in England. When Tim and I were talking, he recalled having recently come across some diaries he had written when he was fourteen.

They were about what was happening in the world. I was thinking all this stuff then. I just didn't realize I was thinking it; I didn't realize what it meant. I didn't realize how important it was. Songs from Woody Guthrie and Billy Bragg and tales of the coal miners were part of my life and they were evoking some of the same images and messages important to me today: let go of control, sit in the fire with my fear. Although this work has global references, it is a personal journey.

He made his way through British public school as a bit of a rebel. He was a poor kid at a rich man's school. His parents stood behind him and told him to follow his heart. It led Tim to theatre.

When Tim was 18, he produced and performed a play in his "very right wing conservative school," his first time with such an undertaking. The audience ridiculed the performance. He recalls being awestruck when the cast, 14- and 15-year-old girls, came up to him afterwards asking "Tim, Tim, are you okay?" The fact that this young cast who had just been scorned had the presence and

space to care about him just blew Tim away. He and the cast went on to a second performance with standing ovations. Tim told me that

part of making new spaces and taking new steps is being ridiculed, and that is something that I have carried with me to this day and now, ridicule runs off me like water off a duck's back. I believe very deeply in the integrity of what I do. Daring to speak from my heart, daring to sing, daring to do open space. These are my personal journey, things I feel I am being called to do.

Damnit, they're fuckin scary to do because they are the things that challenge me at my most fundamental level. The very heart of Tim's insecurities and fears and unknowingness. These are the things that challenge me. It's different for everybody else, but fuck it, we teach best what we are needing to learn. That's what we're exploring.

An expert is someone who's taken time to explore. It's a personal journey and it's a challenge and it's daring to be who I am. It's been a long journey to where I am now and it has been a really personal journey and the reason I am doing this work is because it is making me stronger. And because it is making me happy in what I do.

And I am beginning to understand the greatest gift we can give to the world is our own happiness and that's all we really have to do. We don't need to do anything more than be content with who we are. We don't have to change the world. And the way I explore myself and to make myself happy is with people.

Tim went to college to study theatre, but quickly discovered that at his college theatre was done within the lines. It wasn't about being creative; it was about performing to someone else's

expectations. He switched to studying philosophy because it was always the big questions that fascinated him.

After graduating from college, he made his way to Japan where he lived and taught English as a foreign language. It was his “first time in another culture – experiencing the new, THE OTHER.” After a while in Japan, the Japanese administrator of his English Language School called him aside and said “Tim, you’re a maverick,” not exactly a compliment in Japan. Tim was assigned to the more “peculiar” classes. He left Japan and moved to France to “re-create myself again.” While in France, on a whim, he applied and was accepted into one of the six top broadcast journalism schools in England. He decided not to go. “Somehow I realized, deep inside of me, that real journeys are not that easy.” He moved from France to a job in the corporate sector in Germany – being with people and helping them learn how to talk with each other. Reflecting back, he recalls that even while it was innovative and engaging, “this work in business was soul-destroying. It was the most uncreative two years of my life. I wasn’t doing any music. I wasn’t doing any theatre. I was just working and stuck in some bad habits.” He left the consulting job and founded Engage!InterAct in Holland. All of this before he turned 25.

Tim and his brother Peter and a third friend, Arjen, were in conversation when the idea of Engage<sup>6</sup> began to emerge. It would be a training organization dedicated to the appreciation of diversity and furtherance of the values of respect, cooperation and creativity. It would use arts, theatre and systems thinking to engage people's bodies, hearts and minds.

For Tim, it was time to say

I'm going to take responsibility for the things I care about in the world. This isn't good enough anymore. I'm going to take responsibility for the things I believe in and I have been putting this off for too long. It's breaking my heart and it's breaking my soul and it's shattering me into pieces and I'm helping people do things I don't believe in and I'm doing things I don't believe in and I'm contributing to things I don't believe in by the way I am choosing to live my life and I can't do that anymore because it is making me incredibly unhappy and incredibly sad. I can't do that to myself.

It was a time of enormous sadness and grief as well as a time of new beginning. Leaving behind what I knew and was secure in. I was moving from something I knew that I was fucking good at it. I could sit on my laurels. I was shifting from what I could do with comfort and ease to complete unknowingness. I went from a point where I knew where my life was going to a place where I had none, literally. I started with a blank sheet.

It was the summer of 2000 and I started learning that voices spoke through me. I remember sitting with you, Bob, at Hazelwood that December. You were interviewing me then and I said to you, 'I don't believe I just said that, something else said that through me;' and you said, 'That's okay Tim, you're in

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<sup>6</sup> Engage!InterAct is frequently referred to simply as Engage

a place where people understand that.' And I had never felt understood until then. And I realized that I wasn't a lone freak. Other people dream and I sat in a circle who understood what I was talking about. I went to Hazelwood and found my voice – I had never talked to anyone about them, ever, in my entire life. Being there made me realize I could do this.

Figure 6



*Zoë and Una Nicholson of the United Kingdom*

LifeWorks

Zoë and Una Nicholson created LifeWorks in February 2002 as a platform that would enable them to make their living in a life-affirming way that would bring joy and enrichment to them and those they came into contact with. They recognized their own desire to put their energies toward work truly congruent with their values and essence and they realized that many others might want to do the same thing. Zoë and Una moved beyond their own experience and envisioned a world in which many people could be



and act differently. By entering into this work they hoped that they could:

1. be awakened to their own possibilities and choices;
2. discover or rediscover the joy of deep connection in community;
3. find release in creativity and freedom through play; and,
4. embrace ways to be more consistent with values of love for humanity and the resources of our earth.

To work toward these possibilities, Zoë and Una created LifeWorks to foster people's authenticity, courage and creativity, believing that with self-awareness people can awaken to stronger commitments and responsibilities to each other, their communities and the world. In so doing, ordinary people everywhere can lead the way toward making the world a safer, more peaceful, more affirming place for all beings. LifeWorks organizes programs which bring participants together as learning groups to support each other in leading more authentic lives. They use a combination of face-to-face gatherings followed by online conversations.

I met Zoë at our From the Four Directions gathering at Hazelwood. It was a little more than a year later that I met Una at our Learning Centres' Gathering in Prague.

Zoë was a rising star in the United Kingdom's public health service. She had recently begun a position as co-director of the Brighton-Hove Modernisation Unit – one of the units created to look for innovations to improve public health services in England. Una had fallen in love with drama while at university and worked professionally as a costume designer for movie and theatre productions. At the time I collected their story, both were moving out of their old employment and looking for ways to earn their livelihood through LifeWorks. Theirs was the first story I had collected. After a week of being together at the 2002 global learning village at Castle Borl, we sat outdoors at a hilltop restaurant surrounded by Slovenian vineyards. I had prepared a list of appreciative inquiry-type questions but, as we sat down to lunch and conversation, those questions sat by my side and I trusted my intuition as I asked

what has called you into the life you're living and the work you are doing? What is the story you are living and that is living through you? Why are you here, rather than all the places you could be?

Una responded almost immediately.

Pleasure. I feel like my choices have been made on the basis that they felt good. They bring me pleasure and joy and the promise of integrity. I've always had a sense that things could be better and that life is to be enjoyed to be life affirming

Zoë listened for a while and said that was true for her now, but hadn't always been the case.

I grew up being disturbed about how the world is and carried around quite a bit of a sense of responsibility about it. Gradually, over about a ten- year period, actually, I came to understand that this was not giving me joy. And I also came to a very stark realization that trying to make the world a better place, a more peaceful place wouldn't be achieved by being an executive director in a large public sector organization someplace. I needed to learn how to be more happy with myself.

As we talked, then and later, Zoë and Una spoke about growing up together. Zoë described their family as being rather dysfunctional. Their mother was often distant. Their father had a variety of physical and emotional health problems. Their childhood was a pretty difficult one, filled with secrets and with many things that were not as they seemed. Una and Zoë were key sources of support and key sources of sanity for each other during those times.

Una recalled other aspects of their childhood. She spoke of spending long summers in Jamaica where their mother's mother had emigrated in 1970. She came to love Jamaica and Jamaicans and being there gave her a taste of the wider world beyond England – and she wanted to be part of it.

Zoë went to university first. Her main university experience wasn't the classes, it was political organizing.

I was 19 and was living in a community environment where what someone says at the top of the organization you do. I lived there for a year and learned a lot about Marx, Lenin and Trotsky, where control was very much a way of being...One thing about it though, it taught me to think and I can see things that others miss.

Zoë “did political organizing, hardly ever went to class, sold newspapers and some other nice things along the way.”

Zoe was finished with university and beginning to work at the National Health Service (NHS) when Una started university at the London School of Economics. Una was almost immediately surprised.

I discovered it was a rather dry and boring place – I hadn't reckoned on that at all. It was really dry. I had made a choice to do modern history rather than English, and suddenly all the creativity was gone. But luckily I discovered the drama department – which I had never had anything to do with.

The drama department became Una's savior at university. She thrived there. “Lectures and drinking didn't fulfill me or excite or stretch me or introduce me to life: theatre did. There was so much freedom. The energy is playful.” She directed plays and acted in them. She learned what work was needed behind the scenes.

Una described a journey of many years in which, at first she thrived in drama by being at the center of the work, and in control.

I started to play with connectivity and with different processes for groups to make things together. But definitively with me in charge. Eventually I began to discover that keeping information to myself really didn't work. People stopped being my friends.

After university I went to an international school of co-creation and couldn't get away with it - keeping information to myself - people didn't listen to me. I had to find gentler ways of doing things. Went back to the real world - and keeping information really didn't work there either.

In the NHS Zoë was developing some very similar learnings about creativity and participation. "I had always managed by facilitation," she said.

Encouraging people to do tasks - and doing them together. But I started to realize that encouraging people to be nice to each other and to work well on tasks was not quite enough. I shifted from looking at everything through group world view, to starting to work with people as individuals, where they are at as a starting point. The results were astounding.

A few years ago I thought of myself as trying to serve others, and now I really do understand that I only serve others if I take care of myself.

A coach, Steve, helped me start working on outcomes. "What is the I?" "What do I really want?" Concentrating on the I, I did things I had never done before. The result was astounding. Doing things I had never done before - like reading Meg's book.

Through separate journeys, Una and Zoë had both come to a personal place of inner alignment. Una says, "As I have aligned my

actions with my being and my own energy, things flow. Things just seem to happen a lot more harmoniously, bountifully and easily.”

Zoë expressed this in a similar way:

I am in this journey of what does it mean to slow down life, where there is no difference between me and the tree, just the form it takes. What does it mean to understand we're deeply connected to one another – you, me and the tree?

Zoë participated in and was deeply touched by the first From the Four Directions international practicum.

I remember the room absolutely where I sat and who was there. And I noticed that my mind connecting with my heart was connecting with my body. And I thought “I get it, this is what it is like to be alive.” How can I seek out ways of continually feeling like that? What are the conditions I can create that can make that emerge? We can do all the intellectual stuff about saving the planet, but the bottom line is how can I find a way to feel alive?

She shared this experience, and other changes going on in her, with Una, inviting her into this same field. Six months after the practicum, Zoë participated in the Shambhala Institute's Authentic Leadership Institute and shortly thereafter traveled to the global learning village at Castle Borl. She found herself being more and more attracted to what she was finding in these new relationships. Zoë sat and listened and talked in the session on learning centres that Marianne had called, and the idea that was to become LifeWorks began to shape itself within her. Later that

year, in the fall of 2001, she invited Una to come to a From the Four Directions gathering.

Una recalls that

I managed to drop this thing that I had been carrying for ages that I needed to qualify myself for what I had to give. A day in an open space freed me completely from that. I now know that I have a set of skills and I don't know and I don't need to know when and how I'm going to use them. For a long time I had been thinking that I needed to "do." To become whatever and then I could be a movement leader, or a therapist, or a whatever. So it allowed me to say "I'll be Una and I'll share whatever it is appropriate to share." That might a song, it might be a gesture, it might just be being. Being more essentially myself and responding.

They began to develop LifeWorks. And they made a wonderful team, with strengths complementing each other. As Una described it,

Zoë has vision and perspective, and an ability to see a process through from beginning to end and good at implementing and doing. I'm good at pondering and seeing circles. Zoë likes to do it once, and I will quite happily go over it and refine it. Zoë is good at pushing us on to the next step.

LifeWorks and its first programme had come alive in the world between the time we met in Prague in January 2002 and when I collected their story in July 2002. By February 2003, when many of us met in England to talk about a big project for 2004, there was a major new change. Zoë was pregnant and on her way to becoming the first mother of this group.

When I listened to our session on top of the hill in Slovenia, I was noticed the birthing language. Zoë explained that

LifeWorks has its own identity and the things that spin off and will have their own identity too. In a way I'm looking forward to this. It's something I'm going to have to pay attention to and prepare for. LifeWorks will become more than something that's mine.

As she said that, Zoë clutched her throat and said, "When I say that, it's clear up here in my throat. It's my baby."

Now, a year and a half after we sat on that hilltop, Zoë has another baby. It is this new baby, Constance, that receives Zoë's constant attention. She is unclear what her next work is with LifeWorks.

Una too is unsure. With her partner's energy focused on her baby, Una is not sure what comes next for her and LifeWorks. She explained to me in a recent phone call, with a bit of a laugh, "You know, we were going to show people how to do circle and a bunch of things and make our living doing that. Now, I don't know."

Like others of these seven young leaders, Una and Zoë are continuing to live into their lives, paying attention to what is real around them and inside them. They continue to discover the ways in which their own lives work.



*And Others*

Figure 7



Many others, from around the world are also called into this work.

Rumi speaks of a field beyond wrong and right doing where we might meet. There are many other wonderful people standing in Rumi's field. They have joined in conversations in many circles with me and others on various parts of the planet. I want to mention some of them here because they have been important partners in this inquiry. They include Colleen Bowker who is deepening her skills as a master facilitator of change in South Africa; Alfredo Navarez who works to discover what else a school might be in Mexico; Alenka Zavašnik who works to bring new ways of learning to Slovenia and supports the efforts of Sabina Sneider to turn Castle Borl into a year around learning centre;

Fode Beaudet who worked with The Berkana Institute from Africa for a time and who now steps into new work; Mille Bojer and Zaid Hasson and Alok Singh and Tatiana Glad who have led *Pioneers of Change* for the last several years. And many more.

Beside this circle of young people is a circle of older folks: Toke Mueller and Monica Nissen of Denmark. Annabel, Gillian and Jane, the global dames of Hazelwood House in England. Meg Wheatley, Tom Hurley, Juanita Brown, David Isaacs, Otto Scharmer and Mark Gerzon of the United States. And, of course, many others. This work is done in a global community that finds ways to come together at different times and places on the planet. It is a community dedicated to discovering Rumi's field and learning what else their lives might be.

#### Themes in Their Stories and Work

As noted in the methods section, I gathered these stories over a six month period. I also have had many other discussions and exchanges with these leaders. I've helped several of them construct websites describing their work and I have reviewed many descriptions of their work.

As I listened to their stories and studied their work, I noticed similarities in underlying themes, ideas and ways of looking at the

world. Sometimes these themes are expressed directly in their words in our interviews. Other times they are implicit in the work being done at their various centres. I have combined both in this section.

I've seen six key thematic areas:

1. Life Leads Them to Work
2. They Journey in the Company of Others.
3. Multi-cultural Experiences Surround Them
4. They Work from a Spiritual Center
5. Core Assumptions Ground Them
6. Their Work is Filled with Ambiguity and Uncertainty

### *Life Calls Them to Work*

Home for these folks is a variety of local places: perched on the lip of the English Channel; on a farm in Zimbabwe; working from Holland to towns and villages across Europe; in downtown Zagreb and across Croatia; in Dakar and throughout West Africa; in a medium-sized city in Northern India close to Pakistan. Why have these talented, energetic people with demonstrated capacity to succeed in a variety of situations chosen local work? Why have they stepped away from work that would normally be considered

higher profile and more glamorous to work side-by-side with local people?

In some ways, the answer is simple. They have been called. Each of these people has stepped into their work, not through a logical, rational, methodical, strategic decision-making process. They have each felt a strong sense of calling. In many ways, their life has led them to their work. And, of course, their work has then led them to their life.

Time and time again, at many places in many stories, what came across was the sense of an inner voice calling.

Cire writes,

I have committed to be in this work because my entire being moves me to do what I feel is mine and me, what feels good, what has meaning and makes my life worth while. (Cire, personal communication, January 30, 2004)

Una says the work “is interesting, and it is sweet and surprising.” In many ways she uses joy and pleasure as a guide. She follows a sense of what will bring her deeper contentment.

I wanted to do work that I enjoy and that is meaningful and that enables others to enjoy and discover meaning, too. Zoë and I set up LifeWorks to be a platform for making money doing things we love. On the whole it is really great. In a year or so we have moved from working the majority of our hours for other people to a position now where both of us have LifeWorks as our only job! Zoë is living on maternity

pay and I'm living on air but we are able to give LifeWorks all the time we have for work which is fantastic. Being split between two careers for a long time was wearing and difficult and I always felt that I wasn't able to give LifeWorks what it needed. I thought that having work I love to do would mean I would always want to do it and I still have to drag myself to the computer or to think about something as if I had to go and muck out a pigsty or disembowel something. Hmm, life eh?

Ante describes his decision to move from Chicago to Croatia as “crazy.” But something told him he had to go. He says he does his work because he is invited by “energy, curiosity, learning and love.” At one point in our conversation, I asked Ante, “Where are you now in terms of whether you’re doing this work for Ante, or doing it for the world?” “It’s hard for me to answer,” he said. “I’m doing it more and more for the feeling I get when I am meditating – things just flow. It is not really a rational thing.”

Marianne didn’t make a strategic decision to move to Zimbabwe. She found a voice inside her saying “Africa,” at first quietly, and then more loudly. And when she started Kufunda it was like when she felt called to run for the presidency of AIESEC, an international student organization.

I had this feeling that I had to do it. If I would have thought someone else was going to be able to do it, I would have let them. Maybe that’s being arrogant, but I just had to do it. There was a real fire that was burning – and it was really exciting.

Tim told me that

it has been a really personal journey and the reason I am doing this work is because it is making me stronger. And because it is making me happy in what I do. And I am beginning to understand the greatest gift we can give to the world is our own happiness and that's all we really have to do. We don't need to do anything more than be content with who we are. We don't have to change the world.

Zoë, when she was a young rising star in the British National Health Service, found herself sitting in a meeting not believing the words coming out of her mouth and knew she needed to move on. When Tim started Engage!InterAct, he said he could no longer break his heart or break his soul. He had to go where his integrity called him. Many of Cire's university-educated friends have left for better paying jobs in other countries, but Cire stays. He feels impelled to stay. He sees that he is doing something important and that he is becoming a role model for others who are now choosing to stay in Senegal as well.

Manish had lived three careers before he reached the end of his twenties. He had seen the opportunities, limitations and challenges of work within a major global corporation, the world of NGOs, and the United Nations. In their own way, each career seemed insufficient as a vehicle for the work Manish felt called to do in the world. And, in the end, he returned to his grandmother's

home in India to do his work by founding a locally-based enterprise – Shikshantar.

In example after example, they often felt as if they had no other real choice. It was as if the work had chosen them.

*They Journey in the Company of Others.*

All of these leaders are in close relationship with a number of other folks. One thing that was striking was how many stepped into their current work in the company of close family.

I first recognized this pattern with Una and Zoë. Una told me “I don’t know anyone in the whole world I would feel so compatible working with as Zoë.” In many conversations I have come to see how deeply they feel interconnected and interwoven with each other. Their eyes begin to tear as they speak of the sweetness of being in this work together. They support each other deeply.

Tim speaks of how his parents gave him the right to choose for himself at key points in his childhood, always supporting him with unconditional love. Tim was in jail and trembling while getting a call from his father. Tim had wrecked the family car and been arrested. The words from his father’s mouth were something like, “Well now, too bad that happened. I’m glad you’re safe; now

let's see about getting you out of there.” Three people brought their energy and insight together to incorporate Engage – Tim and his brother Peter were two of the three. And they applied to a small family trust for the initial funds to begin.

When Marianne responded to the call she felt to make Africa her home, she came back to family. Kufunda was founded on the family farm outside of Harare where her mother lives. It's the hub of an extended network of aunts and uncles and cousins.

Marianne visits her grandmother in a rural village and works to learn the Shona language. Marianne's sister, Alice, has been an occasional thinking partner in the creation of Kufunda.

Marianne's mother, a leader in the Zimbabwe national government, often shakes her head, not quite understanding what this crazy daughter of hers is doing – and continues to provide the space and support all the same.

Four people began Shikshantar. Manish, his sister Shilpa and his spouse Vidhi, and close friend Wasif. And all four are still deeply involved. Vidhi's brother, Vivek, and her mother and father are active volunteers in Shikshantar. Manish's parents are also now contributing to Shikshantar. Manish and Shilpa, both raised in Chicago, came back to their extended family in India and its values. Manish speaks frequently of his grandmother who never



went to school, but knows how to care for people and places. I recall one story I have heard several time from Manish. He speaks with a combination of tenderness and passion as he describes his grandmother yelling at him for having wasted a cup of clean water – she can't imagine how a smart boy can do such stupid things.

Ante came to Croatia for the first time in the company of his expatriate father, when the struggle for separation from Yugoslavia was just beginning. His mother, father and sisters have not been directly involved in starting Horizon, though I can't help but recall one evening in Zagreb. I had been listening to Ante's father for several hours as he talked about his life as an exile in the United States and about current conditions in Croatia. Ante's father had been one of the ten expatriate leaders who led an international government set up to represent Croatians living in exile. He had dedicated his life to securing freedom for Croatia and now, he was feeling a sense of powerlessness. His only solution, Ante's father said, was for a "strong man, someone whose orders everyone would follow" to come and lead Croatia. I had been mostly a listener in our conversation, but I found myself saying "But we all know that's not going to be what happens, don't we? That's why I think the work Ante is doing is so important." His father's eyes glazed over a

bit, and he began to choke up. All he said, with deep, deep pride was “Ah, yes. Ante.”

Beyond these close connections with family, each of these leaders is also woven into a rich web of other relationships which they see as integral to their lives.

Cire says

my parents helped me a lot in finding who I'm. I keep remembering my grand fathers and parent's advice: “Dare to build on your relationships rather than pursuing money. Success in life lies in relationships”. I have learnt from them the value of understanding myself and my place in this world. I'm because many people contributed to my development. And I remember so much of what happened to me and understand more myself when I listen closely to others. Since my whole life is a simple movement circling around community, relationships and joy. And this community is expanding everyday beyond the borders of my birth land, crossing oceans and connecting with many good hearted people around the world.

And I feel at home and supported everywhere. I have been spontaneously nurtured by wonderful people, special people, sometimes from people whom I have just seen for the first time, who since I knew them have been walking side by side with me by just saying or doing something that gives me a feeling of being supported, loved, and useful. I feel gifted to be surrounded by these people. Because I know that their gift comes to me from their heart.

This work is not done in isolation. Time and time again, in e-mails and in Internet conversations, when we have spoken by

phone, or when we have gathered together, the importance of being connected is one of the themes that comes up regularly.

Three dimensions of this connection are expressed most frequently:

First, people express their appreciation at being connected to Berkana Institute, to me, and to Meg Wheatley. Our standing at their backs and simply being there is seen as very important. Many times we need do nothing more than be present and listen in various ways.

Second, they're glad that others are creating centres in other places on the planet. Even when months may go by when they are not in contact with each other, simply knowing that companions are out there and engaged in complementary work is very important. They know they are not alone.

Finally, being connected within various networks – Berkana Institute's From the Four Directions network or the Pioneers of Change network, or the networks Shikshantar has spun around learning societies – provides another sense of the larger whole.

These connections are held in a variety of tangible and intangible ways. For example, Marianne and Manish both serve on The Berkana Institute's Board of Directors. I serve on the Kufunda Board of Directors. Manish and I have served on the Pioneers of

Change Board of Directors. Over the last two years these leaders have gathered in twos and threes and more, at various times all over the world. I have met with each of them, often in combination with the others, at least three times, and with as many as six of them at once.

As Tim says,

getting on a plane for me is like getting on a bus for my parents – the world is small. It feels bigger now, but at that time the world was a really small place and I am moving and grooving all over the planet. I don't feel alone in living the life I have led, maybe because people doing this life find each other.

Why do this? Why all these meetings? Work of the heart is very demanding. While we can find each other by phone and fax and e-mail, more is needed. I remember a time in early 2003, not long after I had just started being able to use crutches after major leg surgery. I flew to England for a meeting. In many ways it was insane for me to fly to England, but I knew I needed to be there and it was a meeting that Tim and Zoë and Una had called. Twenty of us gathered from 17 countries; when we were having our closing circle at the end of the first day, with unexpected tears streaming down my cheeks, I recall saying 'I am here because being with you all helps me remember who I am.' And I think I spoke for all of us.

Being connected presents some interesting issues as well. I found myself saying, in the story collection session with Una and Zoë that

LifeWorks is a thing spinning in its own right – a particular configuration of this same energy. One of the challenges is in maintaining the identity of that particularity while realizing its connection to other kinds of particularities. We are in such an interesting search for language to be able to talk adequately about this. For example, when I hear myself, or hear Meg, speaking of From the Four Directions as a Berkana Initiative, it is such an incomplete statement – it has its own piece of the truth, but it is only in a larger context of truth that can move beyond its own ego. We need to find the language that allows LifeWorks or Berkana to claim our particularities in a way that is inclusive and connected rather than exclusionary and separated.

One of the most touching comments in this whole process came from Cire's mother. Cire had been unable to make it to two different global gatherings in 2002 where I had hoped to collect his story. He had gone home for the Ramadan Holy Days, and I spoke with him by phone there. At the end of the call, I asked if his father or mother were home because I wanted to offer them my respect and thanks. Cire said his mother was home, and that she spoke no English. I asked him to translate, without embarrassment, what I had to say. I spoke of my deep respect for

Cire and thanked her for bringing such a son into the world. Her response touched me very deeply. Cire reported that

she is very, very happy to see that you are helping me do this work. She is very, very happy for the help you are bringing to me and she knows that you are very far from Senegal, in a far away country and maybe she will never meet you and that you are in the United States and having the same values of community we have and thinking of how we are knowing the people you are helping and that she is very honored. She says 'When we help people in our community, we see them and we know them very well, but you are helping people you don't know here in Senegal. You are bringing more than we are bringing here in our own community and you are teaching us things we would never know.' She doesn't know if she can help a person she doesn't know and that you are showing her the way. And that one day she hopes she can thank you very much.

These connections hold the work.

### *Multi-cultural Experiences Surround Them*

Another striking thing about many of these folks is the depth of their experiences of other cultures. Hall (1976), suggests that multi-cultural experience literally demands a growth in consciousness. It seems likely that the experiences these leaders have had have been key in their development.

Marianne's father was from Denmark and her mother from Zimbabwe. She spent most of her life growing up outside of Zimbabwe, but a four-year stretch in her teenage years gave her

strong roots in the country. After co-founding and leading the global Pioneers of Change, it was Zimbabwe that called her to her current work.

*Manish* was raised in Chicago, where his parents, both working professionals, had emigrated from India. Throughout his childhood, he frequently visited his grandparents' villages in India. In his twenties he worked first in global finance, and then in France with UNESCO and spent a great deal of time traveling to and working in many countries in Africa, the Middle East and former Soviet Union. Perhaps, his most important destination was to visit his close friend, Wasif Rizvi, in Pakistan where he was forced to confront and unlearn many deep-rooted nationalistic stereotypes that he had been conditioned with. And when the call to his true work came, it took him back to his "illiterate" grandmother in India.

Cire's cross-cultural experience started when he was born into a country that was still a French colony. He grew up with the practices of his tribe, and those of the colonial system at the same time. He spent his childhood in the village of Diagnoum, some 487 kilometers from the capital city of Dakar, where he moved in his late teens for his university education. This move from village to burgeoning urban area represented a second major cross-cultural

experience. In the last three years he has traveled extensively in different parts of Africa, Europe, and North America. He speaks his tribal language; French is his native European language, and he speaks fluent and eloquent English as well.

Tim, an Englishman, makes his home now in the Netherlands and has just purchased land for a new life in Nova Scotia, Canada. After graduating from college, he made his way to Japan where he lived and taught English as a foreign language. He left Japan and moved to France to “re-create myself again.” He moved from France to a job in the corporate sector in Germany which he left to co-found Engage in Holland.

Then, of course, there was Ante. Born in Chicago to Croatian parents, he grew up with stories of home. Perhaps it is not strange that when the opportunity came to “go home,” he abandoned all the plans he had been making and went to Croatia. He spent his summers going around Europe talking to people everywhere he could about Croatia so they could begin to form a good opinion of the country. In university there, like Marianne, he became part of the global student organization, AIESEC and became the country leader. Writing to me with some additional reflections, Ante says



there's also another thing to add to why cultures give a broader perspective. When one is born in a culture it is taken for granted that the world is as it is. When one then truly learns another culture deeply then one realizes that there is not set way of seeing the world. All of what we see are human constructions. Most of what we take for granted are only projections of our minds and our ego.

Ante goes on to say that he believes that that multi-cultural experience is a critical ingredient in finding a sense of calling.

Knowing that we construct the world we live in allows us to become free of the huge chains that our rational, ego put on us. And only once we are able to do this are we able to tap into the universe and to feel a calling. I am sure everyone can feel a calling or however you want to name it. But as we grow up as children we tend to rationally control our lives, our ego gets in the way, our emotions and other patterns get in the way and no longer are we the once natural human beings we were born. Our whole life and our actions become invented constructions. So I feel blessed that I had the chance to break out of those bonds and I guess part of what I do is to help others to do the same – but then this is another cycle I get into because I catch myself often helping others so that I can make easier some of the frustration I had with even having such burdens. (Ante, personal communication, January 23, 2004)

Una speaks of her love for Jamaica, the tropical island her grandmother migrated to the year Una was born. For the first twelve years of Una's life she and her family would frequently spend part of the summer in Jamaica.

I loved their warmth, their physicality and all the diversity. I had a scrapbook of food wrappers – and I loved and relished all the big and little differences. The

fly traps in the supermarket, the way my brother Frankie could climb a coconut tree to get a coconut, washing our laundry under a cold tap outside, waiting and hoping for rain. (Una, personal communication, January 22, 2004)

Una traveled as a teenager in the United States and Europe and chose international relations as her university major.

Una and Zoë grew up in a home with an emotionally distant mother and physically disabled father and were engulfed by a variety of “family of origin” issues which presented the same sort of disorienting dilemmas one usually finds through cross-cultural experiences. In the last few years, as both Una and Zoë have been drawn more and more into this work, their global travel and relationships have grown as well. They share the sense of others that this work must be connected globally.

These multi-cultural experiences seem important for two reasons in particular. First, these young leaders understand, deeply, that this world is actually a very small planet with a great deal of diversity. Second, I suspect they’ve reached the level of consciousness they work from, in part, because of the perspective one gets by learning to live in more than one culture.

### *They Work from a Spiritual Center*

One thing I notice each time I gather with one or more of these leaders is that a sense and presence of spirit infuses their lives. It is not something they do; it is simply part of who they are. It has almost off-hand seamlessness with the rest of their lives. At the very core of their being is a knowing that if they center themselves, open themselves to mystery, attune to the sacred, and approach life from an appreciative frame, good things will happen. This spirituality is not about a god or a deity or the practice of a particular religion, it is simply the way in which they hold themselves as part of a larger cosmos.

Zoë explained that

I started a meditation practice about the same time as all this and I realized it was possible to have a fuller life at a slower speed. I didn't really need to run around filling up my life. I could just slow down, unpack and my life would be a lot fuller. In early 2001 I was in this journey of what does it mean to slow down life, where there is no difference between me and the tree, just the form it takes. When we met at Hazelwood, I remember the room absolutely and who was there. And I noticed that my mind was connected with my heart was connected with my body. And I thought: 'I get it, this is what it is like to be alive.' What are the conditions I can create that can make that emerge? We can do all the intellectual stuff about saving the planet, but the bottom line is how can I find a way to feel alive?

“This might sound a bit woo woo,” Una says.

As I have aligned my actions with my being and my own energy, things flow. Things just seem to happen a lot more harmoniously, bountifully and easily. And the right things happen at the right time. And surprises come along and good things happen. For me, it just becomes a practice of being aligned with myself – that seems to provide the path. I managed to drop this thing that I had been carrying for ages that I needed to qualify myself for what I had to give. A day in Open Space freed me completely from that. I now know that I have a set of skills and I don’t know and I don’t need to know when and how I’m going to use them. For a long time I had been thinking that I needed to do this and that to become a movement leader, or a therapist, or a whatever. So it allowed me to say ‘I will be Una and I will share whatever it is appropriate to share.’ That might be a song, it might be a gesture, it might just be being. Being more essentially myself and responding.

Una also shared that

in 1995 I came home from Paris where I had begun to discover matters spiritual and inner. I was drawn to deep, focused and disciplined meditation that I discovered from a Tai Chi teacher. For about 3-4 years I put my own healing first before everything. I really took letting my soul lead to a new level. It is wonderful to think of it now and it’s still a difficult and daily discipline. And at that time it was very difficult because I was letting go of ‘being an actress’ of ‘being a theatre dance director’ of being a friend to so and so and so and so or being this kind of a daughter. And it goes on. I expect it will until I leave this body. Always letting go and following, letting go.

Regular meditation, music as meditation and walking in silence have simply become part of Tim’s world. He started to

learn when he was fourteen that he needed to let go and sit in the fire with his fears. “Although this work has global references,” Tim says, “it is a personal journey. The frame of my experience is the frame of the consciousness of the world.”

Tim realized that to get on with his life, he needed to

face my own fears and be aware of what was going on and slow down in my own life and come to terms about who I was and say ‘it’s okay to be Tim, its okay to be who I am.’ The world is turning round and bearing witness to its own fears and bearing witness to its own darker shadows. If the world can say that to itself, so can I. It is easy to get lost in the despair and frustration and feeling the need to do something in the world that looks so fucked. But the urgency here is just to slow down and stop and start being with ourselves.

Horizon’s purpose was to provide spaces for people to harmonize. But I asked Ante “How was this harmonizing showing up in Ante? What was going on at the personal, soul and life levels?” He responded “I wanted to do this because it is what I was missing the most.” Ante recently shared these reflections.

I find the spiritual theme quite core. I don't know how to explain what I do. It is a combination of yoga, meditation, psychotherapy, while actually being none of these. I spend a half hour each morning in this practice and then continue during the day (because often meditation can be an escape; and secondly it is during our actions that if we can meditate then this is true meditation) I work on whatever is needed, work with my own shadows, envision what needs to happen but above all I just try to be one with the universe. It is

in these states that amazing things happen. And synchronicity is a good measurement for this as you told me once. I guess it is sort of like being centered and I find that people who are doing amazing things have a practice of being centered and tapping into the universe. (Ante, personal communication, January 23, 2004)

When I asked Manish what he wanted to invite into Shikshantar, his response was that

this work is not about saving or changing the world, but about how I live my own life and live it as an invitation to others. As the Bhagavad Gita says ‘Try to live the way that you feel is true with your own inner values; don’t worry about the results.’

Meditation has been an important part of Marianne’s life for years. It was in one Vispassna session where the details of the initial vision for Kufunda came to her in full detail, even though she wasn’t supposed to be thinking about things! She also talks about how meditation led her to see that simplicity and co-creation were basic values to work with. “You can’t just push this down people’s throats. It’s not so much that we must all have this vision – not one truth dominating all – but inviting in many ways of seeing and being.”

They engage the world from a spiritual center. It is simply part of who they are. It comes from inside. It is neither dogma nor structure. It is soul.

### *Core Assumptions Ground Them*

This expression of a spiritual center leads easily into expression of other core assumptions based on the values that guide these leaders and their work. This is not simply a list of lofty platitudes that gets framed and placed on a wall.

In early 2002, when Zoë, Una, Tim, Ante, Cire, Marianne and I gathered with others in Prague to talk about this work and how to support each other, we shared the values that we felt called us together. We wrote

words on small pieces of paper and then started arranging them in patterns on the floor.

As I work, now, with the words we patterned, the following deeply held assumptions emerge:

1. We live in an abundant, nourishing and nurturing environment. This ground we walk on, this home ecology that holds us, creates our sense of place in the world and enables us to better tune in to life and invite it to guide us.

Figure 8



2. Above all, this is a creative adventure. It is experimental. It calls us to focus our attention on the now. Our work, and our lives, are laboratories of grace.
3. We have a deep trust in the inherent goodness of the human spirit. Our dreams bring us into relationship with that spirit. We are awake in the world and work from a respect for ourselves, and each other.
4. It is not only possible, it is essential that we learn to live with each on this planet in ways which promote mutual respect, fairness and justice. Our differences can be a source of strength rather than a cause for divisiveness.
5. This work is much bigger than any of us are separately, and it still calls on each of us to be separate, and ourselves.
6. We are called upon to use our full imagination and learning, our collective diversity, our respect for synchronicity and mystery, and our willingness to be transformed.
7. We do this important work with a spirit of play, humor, friendship and love. We are connected and we connect to others.



8. Our local work is the critical ground from which global transformation can emerge, with integrity.

One other to be added to this list comes from comments from Manish who was unable to attend the Prague meeting, concerning fairness and justice. A final assumption which is so deeply held that it was not voiced in this gathering concerns the degradation of our eco-system. From many conversations over the last several years, I know how much these last two assumptions, not explicated voiced at our meeting in Prague, permeates the lives and work of these young leaders, so I will add them:

9. Issues of fairness and justice are of paramount importance. It is critically important to notice and call attention to all situations in which people are being treated unjustly.
10. Our eco-system has been destabilized through over-use and misuse of natural resources. Dramatic changes are needed, now, to move back towards a stable eco-system.

The core assumptions of these leaders are based on values which need to be more clearly articulated. They lead to operating principles which also need to be made more explicit. These core assumptions give voice to the ways in which this group looks at the world.

*This Work Is Filled with Ambiguity and Uncertainty*

Most of these leaders have been discovering that they need to accept a high level of uncertainty and not knowing. And while the work may bring them joy, it is not always easy. “I was really apprehensive about From the Four Directions because I thought it would be a lot of people who wanted to save the world – strategic planners and organizers – because I thought that’s what Zoë did,” Una said while describing her first time with a weekend meeting of people working with From the Four Directions.

I dawdled and was too shy and didn’t want to get out of bed. And then we had the check-in circle, and it was terrifying – a bit like leaping out of an airplane. I would be in sharing circles that were held by one person all the time – the circles had a leader, someone who was going to impart or guide. Suddenly I was in a space where lots of people were saying, “I don’t know.” It was truly amazing. The whole weekend was really amazing; it was an explosion. I was really, really ready to experience this new way of being with other people.

Zoë reminded her “One of the things Meg said was to ‘always remember that the first thing you try won’t be the right thing.’ This is all a journey and we don’t really know where it is going.

“I was already embracing that in some areas,” Una shared, but when it came to work, she used to think that she had to be certain, that she had to know how things were going to work out. She had spent much of her life believing that one demonstrated

one's competence by sharing only what they knew – not what they did not know.

Tim believes that this work is “enabling us to take steps into the unknown and have the strength and the power to do things we hardly imagine are possible, like holding a village like this for these past six days.” For him, when he started Engage in July of 2000, it was

a time of leaving behind what I knew and was secure in. I was moving from something I knew that I was fucking good at it. I could sit on my laurels. I was shifting from what I could do with comfort and ease to complete unknowingness. I went from a point where I knew where my life was going to a place where I had none, literally. I started with a blank sheet.

For Manish, two traditional Indian concepts spoke to his sense of embracing uncertainty.

*Anekantvad* holds that there are multiplicities of perspectives on the truth. *Aparigraha* means non-possessiveness or non-ownership. Embracing both *Anekantvad* and *Aparigraha* leads us on the path towards appreciating uncertainty, unknowing and unlearning.

Cire writes that

today, the path is still unclear, it is literally invisible; and yet my heart is often being moved and my soul split open. My lovely work is taking me every day on a journey of new experiences. These experiences are opening my heart on the unimaginable beauty of life

and community around me. Every day I awaken to a new day. I go out into the world with a feeling of excitement and joy and of feeling of being at home, everywhere in our diverse supportive community. I do my work with engagement and joy, with lots of downs and still many ups. I break for prayer, sometimes meditation, often to be with my parents or to hang out with friends. I love my work. I love my community and I love the life I'm living. I will persevere through uncertainty and fear about my ability to carry out the mission before me.

Following this path of uncertainty isn't always easy. Zoë quotes an Australian at one of our gatherings who said "It's following the path of least resistance that makes for crooked rivers and crooked men." She added "When it's difficult you still have to do it." In other words, some of the ways in which people talk about this work can sound soft and fluffy – but it actually requires a clear internal compass and a willingness to continue on, even when the way is unclear and the process uncertain.

The work of these centres mirrors the ambiguity and uncertainties in the lives of their founders. Inconsistencies are always present. Anything that resembles a "pat answer" is looked at with skepticism. No endowment stands behind any of these centres; finding funds for operation is always an issue. What is to be done, in terms of programs and activities, comes by watching what's growing and what's needed – not by planning the year in

advance. These centres build their work through relationships, examination of assumptions, following spirit and intuition. They represent a new way of being in the world.

### My Lived Inquiry

*2001*

This inquiry has many beginnings, and no end. It has a pause from time to time: a temporary closure where experiences are formed into concepts and constructs which then provide part of the framework for the next round of inquiry. This thesis is one such pause.

I have said that the inquiry bounded in this thesis was born in January 2002 when I and most of my co-researchers gathered in Prague to talk about a global network of local leadership learning centres. It was conceived in July 2001 when several of my co-researchers and others, including me, sat in a conversation circle outside the walls of Castle Borl in Slovenia. The ground for the inquiry had been being prepared during much of the preceding year when I was stepping into my new work at New Stories and The Berkana Institute.

I chose Organic Inquiry for my methodology because it calls forth the full lived experience of the researcher. I have shared part

of the stories of my co-researchers, and now I want to share part of my story as well. I have memories of some of the questions and issues discussed in this thesis from as early as my teenage years. I will begin this story, however, from early 2001, with some of the experiences which preceded the conversation circle at Castle Borl.

One place to begin is with the Company of Friends. For two years ten of us in the United States met as a Company of Friends. We came together as friends and colleagues, thinking initially that our meetings were to be about the efforts of our different organizations. On occasion during those two years the conversations drifted to an organizational level, but there was so much to talk about in terms of our own lives that we rarely had time to talk about organizations. In some ways that experience, in and of itself, is so much like this thesis. The questions and issues raised in this thesis are about how we each find our way to authentic lives. The members of the Company of Friends were Juanita Brown, David Isaacs and Anne Doshier from The World Café, Wink Franklin and Chris Bache from the Institute of Noetic Science, Tom Hurley from the Chaordic Commons and Meg Wheatley, Carole Schwinn and David Schwinn from The Berkana Institute. I was part of the group and co-convened it with Juanita Brown.

I feel called, and feel called with you all, to help bring into being a new ethic of deep relatedness. An image of us embracing each other deeply and unconditionally. Far from strategy and organizational form. How could we be with one another in a way that allows us to deepen into spirit? Further focusing and expressing the divine world without organizational form dominating. An image of standing together in a new way. Standing with and being for each of you. Bearing witness to one another. Perhaps we are on the threshold. (Bob's journal, March 30, 2001)

Those were the words I wrote down towards the end of our first gathering of the Company of Friends in the early spring of 2001. I am not sure who spoke them; they do not sound like me. But they remind me of the spirit I felt at the time.

I and others were in the final preparation stages for the third international practicum for a global leadership initiative – From the Four Directions: People Everywhere Leading the Way. This practicum was to be held in South Africa and was to be preceded by a gathering of friends from around the world to celebrate Marianne's 30<sup>th</sup> birthday in Zimbabwe.

It was clear to me that something new was happening – at least for me, and perhaps in the world. After 25 years as co-founder and then Executive Director of a nonprofit corporation I was ready to find my way into new relationships. I was ready to

deepen my personal inquiry into what might make a difference in the world.

Less than a month later, I was in Zimbabwe. A group of 50 or so of us had gathered to celebrate Marianne's 30<sup>th</sup> birthday. This ragtag group included some of Marianne's closest friends from Pioneers of Change and from Denmark, as well as some of us who had come into relationship with her through From the Four Directions. I knew I was in a different world the moment I arrived in Zimbabwe, but it did not really hit home until several days later when we traveled to Mhondoro, the village Marianne's family had come from and where her grandmother still lived.

On this hot dusty day we had driven over narrow roads as I marveled at how big the sky actually is in Zimbabwe. Marianne had asked that instead of birthday presents, we bring clothes, medicine and toys for the AIDS orphanage in Mhondoro. We would spend the night with some sort of reception. Suddenly I noticed the overlander bus we were on was slowing and a swarm of people in brightly colored clothes was running across the fields towards us. Waving, singing, smiling – we were being greeted as I have never been greeted before.

I remember being in a daze as I got off the bus and wandered across the field, looking for the orphanage. I “knew” what an



orphanage looked like: frame building, concrete steps, probably a little worn. Cabinets with glass doors where medicines would be kept. Suddenly we were standing in an enclosure: a thatched roof through which I could see the sky; dirt floor, not more than 400 square feet; poles stuck in the ground, almost like a picket fence forming the walls. Perhaps a hundred children's faces were grinning at us as I and others arrived in the enclosure. Minutes that were an eternity long passed before I realized that this was the orphanage. I had arrived in Africa.

A little while later, blankets were spread on the ground. Our bags of clothes and toys and supplies were heaped in the middle. I remember feeling deep, deep shame. They were so excited by what we had brought – cast off clothes, goods from Toys-R-Us, and a meager array of supplies. It was so little for us and it was so much for them. It was so very little for us.

I remember reaching into my pocket and finding a hundred dollar bill that I quietly place in the hand of Marianne's uncle. Still so little, but it was what I had to give then.

Darkness came and we went overland on our buses along a dirt road, through a stream, and finally to the village. The people had run across the fields to be there when we arrived, joining those who had stayed behind to prepare a feast for us. A generator

powered a couple of strings of low intensity bulbs that provided the only light in the village. They had prepared a feast with all their hearts for this granddaughter's global gathering. It was at the same time the most generous and the most meager feast I have ever encountered. A mush like substance; deep fried caterpillars and slimier ones in some sort of sauce; some very lean grilled chicken; some sort of green vegetable; warm cola or beer. It was everything they could offer us, and it felt as if we had stretched their resources to the limit.

The dancing and singing was already underway in the large round hall Marianne's family had built in the village, one of only two or three buildings with a concrete floor. We were packed in, as one group after another led the others in drumming, singing, circle dancing. I was transfixed. I was in Africa.

Sometime after midnight I lay down on a sleeping pad under the bright, cloudless African sky. There was a full moon that night. I would drift off to sleep, to be roused minutes later with the sound of song or drums in the background. I climbed from my pad in the dark hours before dawn and began to walk around again. Many had gone to sleep. Many more were still awake. I began to listen to different men, as they told me the stories in their lives. Later, when dawn provided enough light to see my journal, I wrote that

the dawn comes slowly in Africa. Following in the trail of joy of the night.

People together in song and dance and rhythm.  
People together with voices quiet and loud. Smiles, so many smiles.

We are each deeply honored in this meeting.  
They open their hearts to us and the effect is heart-opening. They open their eyes to us and the effect is eye-opening.

Let this experience breathe me. It is the experience of life. (Bob's journal, April 29, 2001)

The skies continued to lighten, and more people began to appear. By early morning we were gathered together in the large round hall to hear a small speech from the village headman. He said the songs we had listened to the night before were songs of sorrow. He proceeded to tell us how they, the people of Mhondoro, would never have what we had, for 400 years or more. And he said that we must help them. They could do nothing themselves. They were, he said, helpless.

I was deeply shocked. I saw such richness and abundance here. Of course, there were needs. But there was so much more. There was such vitality, such life. I understood in a whole different way things that Marianne had been saying earlier about wanting to bring asset-based community development to Zimbabwe. I recalled the words from one of my pre-dawn conversations when one man had said to me, speaking of his resistance to asking for help, "If I apply and apply and apply, I become an applicant."

Somehow, the people of Zimbabwe had become applicants and it felt terribly wrong. I realized that asset-based community development was the way things were done before people in villages in Zimbabwe learned that they were dependent on others for help. More than two years later when, in reviewing literature for this thesis, the comments of Wolfgang Sachs (1992) and his colleagues about the plight of so-called underdeveloped countries would take me back to this village.

We left Mhondoro and continued our journey into Africa. I fell in love with the land. The majesty and the beauty were astounding. The company of people I traveled with was amazing as well.

I recall one dinner, in the bush, after a day of touring a game reserve. We were having a fancy dinner and I chose to sit with a group of people I didn't know very well. All were members of Pioneers of Change. They were having a discussion about sustainable economic development; one young man, Alok Singh, who would later become a close colleague and friend of mine, was making some particularly strong and convincing arguments. I tried to join in – to get into the conversation at their level – in spite of the fact that I really didn't know much about sustainable economic development. Suddenly, I realized that made no sense at

all. What I needed to learn to do was to support these intelligent young men and women as they pursued these questions and issues – not to pretend to have their expertise. It was a memorable moment and part of my coming to realize that the work I was called to do was the work of supporting these young leaders.

One of my most striking experiences in Africa was our last evening in Zimbabwe. Marianne’s mother had arranged a bush dinner of the kind she hosted for visiting heads of state. We were on the edge of the jungle in Victoria Falls. After dinner a group of Zulu dancers were performing and inviting us to join them in the dance.

Always shy about my body and my awkwardness with dance, I hung in the shadows. A Zulu woman caught my eye and came and grabbed my hand and pulled me into the dance. I do not know what happened. What I recall was incredible energy flowing through me, from the sky to the ground and I danced as if possessed. But the possession was actually a releasing of energy from within me. I wrote later,

where did that dance within me come from last night?  
Yes, yes, it came from within and, of course, it came from without.

What else lurks within me begging to be freed?  
Or perhaps a better frame is to simply acknowledge that there are gifts and capacities within me – voices of

many colors – that yearn to come forth and to be freed.  
(Bob’s journal, May 4, 2001)

We left Zimbabwe and traveled back to Johannesburg and then on to Naledi – the Valley of the Queens – where we would hold our third international practicum for From the Four Directions. We had gathered a group of some 25 leaders, mostly from Africa, but also from India, the United States and Europe. The “we” is the group of people from the United States – from New Stories and PeerSpirit and The Berkana Institute – who had launched From the Four Directions. We knew why we had organized the meeting and what was supposed to happen. We had carefully designed the four days we would all be together.

And we were almost completely unprepared for the questions that came from young activists like Manish from India and Coumba from Mali and Kepta from Kenya. They wanted to know more about our worldviews. They wanted to explore our stand on globalism – the colonialism of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. They wanted to know how we lived out the values we espoused. We wanted to teach them how to use circles of conversation to invite people to step forward with their own leadership. They were polite and at the same time firm in their questions. We accommodated them as best we could.

We had scheduled long days at the practicum. Usually beginning with breakfast around 7:30 and going until 8:00 or so in the evening – with a long break for lunch and a shorter one for dinner. It wasn't until the next to last night together that I learned the young activists were continuing their own conversations from the time we adjourned until almost dawn. I sat with them for the last night – until almost 3:00 in the morning – as we explored together a wide range of questions, issues and concerns.

In that last session, as well as in our “regular sessions”, the questions of these young leaders stayed with me. As I look back in my journal now I see questions like

how does one share meaning in a meaningful way?  
How do we create access to the conversations going on in the Boardrooms, NGOs and Government Councils?  
What do we do about the fact that there are people in places without power and people in power without places? How do we really connect to each other – what is meaningful? (Bob's journal, May 2001)

More than anything else at Naledi, I realized how right I and others had been in launching From the Four Directions and how naïve I had been about the rest of the world. Some of this is subtle and even though this was only three years ago, my memory is somewhat faded. But I think I had some deeply ingrained assumptions about knowing more and about having answers that was inexperienced and immature. I think such assumptions come

easily to Americans, and as I encountered these incredibly bright people from Africa and Asia, I saw my own naïveté. My experience at Naledi was an invitation to me to find new ears with which to listen to the stories of people everywhere.

After the practicum I made a short trip to spend my birthday with friends in Botswana and to meet with a From the Four Directions circle in Gaborone. By the time I returned to the United States, I knew that by going to Africa, and seeing only three countries, my world had changed. I had many more questions. I had much less knowing. And of course, paradoxically, I had much more knowing that allowed me to see how little I knew!

A little more than two months later, I traveled for the first time to Castle Borl in Slovenia. For many years Miha Pogacnik, virtuoso violinist and Cultural Ambassador of the Republic of Slovenia, has served as the custodian of Castle Borl. Said to be the home of Parsifal's family many centuries before, the Castle now serves as a place where a variety of global communities gather during the summer months. One of the gatherings in July of 2001 was a combination of a Pioneers of Change annual meeting and a European meeting of people beginning to work together with From the Four Directions. I joined about 100 people for a little more than a week in the lovely Slovenian countryside.



One of the topics of conversation was the creation of local learning centres. As described earlier in this thesis, Marianne hosted a workshop session on her plans to move to Zimbabwe, after having spent most of her life in Europe, and to start a learning centre there. Looking back in my journals, I see different questions being raised. “What are the principles behind these centres? What are important preconditions for creating one? What processes will be used to hold them?” (Bob’s journal, July 2001).

Those of us who were intrigued with the idea of such local learning centres felt as if there was a field of endeavor being created. We noted some of the aspects of that field which I described in my journal.

We begin; we make mistakes; things don’t work. We do it together. Whatever we think of and plan is not what will happen. What makes it work is that we stay together. If we understand we’re making it up as we go along, we’re going to give each other more room to fail. We should make bridges from the old to the new for people who are not part of the experiment. (Bob’s journal, July 2001)

Conversations at Borl went late into the night. I was part of a multi-generational global community that had come together to be with each other and with the possibility of a different future waiting to be born. In the closing circle that week many words

were shared. But what I remember most was standing, hands linked in the closing circle. We were facing outward, rather than inward. Backs to each other. Suddenly tears began to stream down my cheeks. My mind and memory, open to all possibilities, had recalled a wondering I had several times in the previous two years. I had asked myself if ever someone twenty or so years my junior might come into the same sort of relationship with me that I had had with Robert Theobald. In that closing circle I realized that there was not one, but many people with whom I was stepping into such a relationship. It was time when the grief of Robert's passing rubbed along-side the joy of new possibility.

Later that evening, we sat around outside the Castle walls. I had been invited to be on the new Board of Directors for Pioneers of Change (POC) and even later in the evening we were to have our first meeting. I was asking some questions about the origins of Pioneers.

Colleen Bowker from South Africa, one of the co-founders of POC, mentioned a formative meeting held in the hills of California in the fall of 1999. I felt a little shiver. I asked where the meeting was, actually, and when. She said it was in late-October near Santa Cruz at a Tibetan Buddhist retreat. I asked her the name and she said she couldn't recall it. Tears started to come to my

eyes then, as they do now while writing these words. I asked her if it was Pema Osleng. And her eyes widened and she said it was. Alfredo and Mille, two other leaders of Pioneers of Change who were at the same formative meeting were sitting near Colleen and me. They overheard me ask the question and wanted to know how I knew it was Pema Osleng.

In October 1999 I had been at Pema Osleng for a retreat with Joanna Macy. My last day there, a new group was arriving. We had passed each other on the trails, seeing each other with unseeing eyes. A global group had come to start a new network. Many of the people whom I had come to love in these first months of 2001 were there, passing me as I passed them.

In August of 1999 I had been with Joanna, whom I already considered a dear friend from the time we had spent together in 1998. Joanna practically insisted that I come to an eleven-day retreat she was offering in California in October. I had made many excuses as to why I could not do so. And she continued to insist. Finally I relented and said I would come. It was an incredibly important eleven days for me. My time there was of immeasurable help in finding the courage and clarity to help Robert complete his life a little more than six weeks after the intensive, to help me leave the organization I had served for 25 years by the end of the year,

and to help my mother complete her life during the first six months of 2000.

I sat with Colleen and the others outside the walls of Castle Borl. How was it possible that this time and space of preparation for my future life would rub up against the very people I would be drawn into deep relationships with? I was touched beyond knowing, at the same time certain that synchronicity was playing a major role in my life.

As we left Castle Borl, several of us said that we wanted to gather again to talk specifically about learning centres and the possibility of forming a global support network. And the meeting which would occur in Prague in January of 2002 started to come into being.

I left the Castle for a little side-trip to Budapest. After more than a week of endless conversation, I was ready to be a recluse and to have silence for several days. The universe, and synchronicity once again said, "Wait a minute." It was as if someone wanted to make sure I had gotten the message. As I was leaving for the train station, someone else asked if we could ride together. Dania from Ecuador said she was going to Budapest as well. I said, "Of course." We shared the taxi and then we shared a train compartment. We talked nonstop for the six hour ride to

Budapest. Then we spent most of the weekend together with each other and a friend Dania was visiting. This young woman from Ecuador had come to Europe as a high school exchange student. She had been back and forth several times since. She was finishing her masters degree in sustainable economic development in a European university. She was a global citizen with deep roots in Ecuador. Dania became another of my growing band of younger sisters. I realized that part of what I wanted to do with my life was to support her.

I came back from Europe to another meeting of our Company of Friends in late July of 2001. We talked about the role of “strange attractors” in the world and said that forms of engagement like conversation circles and world cafes as well as efforts like the Institute of Noetic Science and The Berkana Institute were strange attractors bringing together energy from which a new culture might emerge. We asked

what does it mean to be in a visible attractor role?  
How do we hold it personally – ourselves? How do we hold it for those who surround us? How do we hold it for family and friends? What are the conditions and principles of interconnected and interdependent relationships? How do we create the conditions for remembering who we are? (Bob’s journal, July 2001)

Heady questions. They were surrounded by a sense that we were each and collectively standing within an important time in

our lives. Someone referred to it as “standing in the void,  
surrounded by everything we need.” (Bob’s journal, July 2001)

Waking early on our last day together this poem came to me.

bright smiles  
that come upon the faces  
of exquisite remembrance  
in a company of friends  
that tearful eye  
quavering voice  
of joy and sorrow  
loss and hope  
prayer and remembering  
dreams fluttering on breezes  
alongside faces yet unborn  
in the pale dawn  
light casts shadows to earth  
and raises them up again  
and again and again  
until they become the long shadows of dusk  
leading to another dawn  
(Bob’s journal, July 2001)

I came away from the Company of Friends gathering and  
went almost immediately to Cortes Island in British Columbia to  
an invitational gathering at Hollyhock. For several years I had  
been part of a group of 100 or so people from North America who  
gathered for a week in early August to be with each other. We were  
people who engaged in a variety of transformational activities. A  
combination of writers, activists, philanthropists, and just  
interesting folks. This group was another of my communities. And  
it was a time for me to be with my experiences of the first long

months of 2001. I realized that I was undergoing some dramatic shifts.

I yearn for the questions and for that which is new.

For the ways Deborah Chapin will bring people into artistic expression as a mirror and a portal. For what David LaChapelle has learned about aligning presence and intuition and language. For what Dan Leahy is learning about how to invite people into their power.

I want to sit and stand alongside those who have touched me in Africa and Europe and Asia and South/Central American and listen to them. It is their time to lead, and my time to serve them. Their time to lead and my time to stay in connection with them. And to help others do so as well.

Will I find the courage to change? I suspect I will, but when and how? Patience, love, showing up.  
(Bob's journal, August 2001)

Later that month I was at Destiny Bay, a small bed and breakfast in British Columbia with my spouse and daughter and the Nakatsugawas. More than 30 years before, as a senior in college in Japan, I had fallen into relationships with the Nakatsugawas. They had become my host parents. And just as I had met the only grandfather I knew in my life in their family, his son – my Japanese father – was the only grandfather my daughter has known. My family and my Japanese host parents get together once or sometimes twice a year, in Japan or Washington State or Hawaii. I wrote in my journal that

here, once again, with my immediate family – Susan, Annie, Otoosan and Okaasan. Later this month it will be 31 years since this family began – when Susan and I met in the Oakland airport on the way to Japan.

So this is what it is like to look back over a life. To see the joys and sorrows, births and deaths, emptiness and fullness and so much life.

I don't know how many years lie ahead of me as I sit here on the deck listening to the waves lapping on the shore and watching the cedar boughs lift in the wind. And in many ways it does not matter.

The challenge and the invitation is to discover how to live each day as fully and deeply as possible.

I was just re-reading and remembering about my dance at Victoria Falls. What a feeling of alignment with life. A blessing, a treasure. So, is it about having more moments like that – or simply accepting them when they come?

I don't feel fragmented the way I did two years ago, before the deaths of Robert, my time at NRF and my mother. I am firmly within the "and Bob, I'll find time for you" period of my life.

And I am still, very much, learning to be in this zone. Sometimes it is as if I am afraid to "be" with both the power and the peace that is within me. To protect myself from both I keep myself out of phase – out of full alignment and full integrity.

It is as if I am afraid of the quiet and the silence I say I cherish. And I flee from them rather than let them soak in. So what is it I really fear?

My fears come from complex sources and varied experiences built up in 52 years of living. Psychologists would have us believe that those experiences of early childhood are the most important. Also I suspect there are perhaps things unresolved from past lives. I guess I am drawn to Kegan's model of "problems at one level of consciousness don't get resolved at a higher level – they just become less important." (Bob's journal, August 19, 2001)

I continued in a space of wonderment through the rest of the year, gathering with several groups, spending time tending the



fires of Berkana and New Stories. I continued to be in a place of deep curiosity about what was emerging around me and what work I was called to do. In December, before another gathering of the Company of Friends, I sat on Limantour Beach and wrote that

I am so extraordinarily blessed. Here I sit on a cloudy Thursday afternoon. The surf before me, sun slits on the horizon and cliffs to hold me to the north and south. My living is a blessing and I give thanks to all that has made me and to all that surrounds me. I give thanks to my parents for loving me and grounding me in kindness and helping me find my way in the world. I give thanks to Susan for standing by me during the hard times as well as those that were easier. I give thanks to Annie for being such a bright luminescence in my everyday and in my future. I give thanks to Ojiisan (my Japanese grandfather) for his love and respect and teaching which helped me open to new realms. I give thanks to Robert for his friendship and collegueship and service and for his many gifts. I give thanks to my lovely circle of friends and colleagues...

I feel myself reaching my core and my ground more frequently and more easily now. I find myself both with more “authority” and more relaxation in my unknowing. (Bob’s journal, December 13, 2001)

And the Company of Friends met for the last time of the year, continuing to plumb the key questions.

What is the work we are called to? What is the pattern language that allows us to experience health, healing and wholeness? What is the core myth that each of us is living and what if we were to live the larger life? What are the practices, processes, constructs and relationships that would make the ride a little easier? (Bob’s journal, December 15, 2001)

To say the least, it was one hell of a year. Among other things, the ground was being prepared for this inquiry and thesis. By the end of 2001 I was fairly certain that my dissertation would be about the work of these learning centres and I would find out more when we gathered in Prague in early 2002.

*2002*

The day after Susan's birthday, January 10<sup>th</sup>, I got on a plane and left for Prague. I would spend a little more than a week in Prague, go directly to a conference New Stories was supporting in San Diego, return home and leave almost immediately for our family winter interlude on Maui.

I was pushing myself much too hard. As I look back, now, at what I just wrote about 2001, I realize what a very, very full year it was. Much was at work in me. I arrived in Prague and was swept almost immediately into meetings. Everyone else had arrived before me – Ante, Tim, Una, Zoë, Marianne, and Cire. Alfredo, who still hopes to start a learning centre in Mexico, was with us as well. Manish had been unable to come.

We spent time quietly talking with each other. We were being hosted at the Danish Ambassador's residence. His daughter, Mille, was one of the co-founders and leaders of Pioneers of

Change. She and Zaid, another Pioneers leader, dropped in and out of our meeting as well. We talked and built relationships with each other. We took Cire for his first walk in the snow. And for his first snowball fight.

At many levels, I recall that we didn't need to talk about the content of our work. We didn't need to talk about strategies and tactics. We simply needed to be in each other's company. We needed to be with each other and to know that each of us was doing the same work in the world in different ways. Ante talked about wanting to align his ego behind the work that wants to be done. Zoë spoke of wanting to simply be part of a group that does what she wanted to do. Una spoke of the song of her spirit. Alfredo wanted to be where it was possible to listen to the diversity. Tim wanted to let the magic loose. (Bob's journal, January 12<sup>th</sup>)

We came together and agreed a global network wanted to be born. We said we would use our face-to-face time to deepen our relationships with each other and then use different distance communication technologies to do the work. It was a lovely time.

The next days were equally amazing. A separate group of about 12 people had come together to see who would form the new leadership group, a "cultivation unit," for Pioneers of Change. I had been asked to join them in what we had jointly designed as a

discernment process which would allow a decision to happen, rather than be made. We had planned that I would absent myself for several days in the middle of the week to allow them some time alone with each other. What we had not planned was that I would become very ill for that time. I think my crazy schedule, jet lag and some flu bug had finally caught up with me. I spent three days in my small hotel room in bed.

But I helped them begin. And I helped them end. And I stood as witness to this process through which twelve people who did not know each other well found their way through to the seven who would step forward as leaders for the coming two years.

One of the things I recall most vividly from my time in Prague was a long walk on one of the last evenings. We were walking through the snow-covered cobblestones to the old town section of Prague for dinner. I found myself walking along side Ridwana, an intense, bright and articulate Indian lawyer from Cape Town. We were talking about the changes in the world since the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks in the United States. We were talking about the how many Americans found it so difficult to believe the rest of the world wasn't just jealous of the United States. She kept asking why Americans just didn't understand how angry she and others were at America – not at Americans, but at the country and

that which it represents in the world. I recall explaining in many different ways – our lack of news coverage of the rest of the world, our comparative isolation, our general lack of interest in things happening outside our shores, our apparent need, as a nation of immigrants, to cut ourselves off from our roots. Each time I offered a different explanation, Ridwana thought for a while and then asked me again, “But why don’t you get it?”

It was as if there were no words I could say which would explain to this bright young woman how it was possible for a country as bright, inspiring and full of possibility as America could be so blind, arrogant and both mis-see and mis-understand the rest of the world. By her words and questions, I came to better understand how unfathomable America, and Americans were to people on the rest of the planet.

A year later, in early 2003, Ridwana was one of the young people from South Africa who went to Iraq to be human shields against US bombing. I understand she made it home safely. I honor and admire her. She touched my heart and my mind.

The next months passed quickly. After the meeting in Prague, I knew that my dissertation would be about the young leaders who had stepped forward to create learning centres. From early February to the end of June, I worked on writing and revising

my dissertation proposal. And then revising it again. I wanted to be able to begin to collect stories when I returned to Castle Borl in July. I had my final meeting with my dissertation committee and they approved my proposal. Several days later I got on a plane and flew to Europe.

The journey of this inquiry has been one of community and of relationships.

What an incredible journey, these last 33 hours. Now, on this silent hillside; several hours ago in Knight's Hall in Castle Borl with an incredible evening of music and story and ballad which I hadn't anticipated at all. I arrived some six hours ago, and then the evening erupted.

What a day. I arrived at Heathrow (Stewart & Bennett) to be warmly greeted by Alok, Cire and Alfredo, later joined by Mille and Zaid [the Pioneers of Change cultivation unit had been meeting near London the day before I arrived and decided to come out to the airport to greet and welcome me ].

Arrived tired, and then energized by their presence.

And then, somewhat miraculously on by myself on the bus to Stansted [Airport] and quickly falling into Tim and Maria and then finding Una and Zoë as well. We flew to Graz and then had this wonderful, frivolous drive to Borl – just fun.

I continue to be so blessed. I feel myself moving into this time of collecting stories. Noticing the power of even the anticipation of the collection.

I am so blessed to be able to be here with these fine folk. I often wonder "why." And then remember "the answer to why is yes." [a take off on Peter Block's book "The Answer to How Is Yes"] (Bob's journal, July 4, 2002)

It was an amazing week. I began the collection of stories from Tim and Una and Zoë. I put it off until the last minute. Somehow I was afraid to step into this piece of the work. As I described in the procedures section, I finally began with collection of Zoë and Una's story at a hillside restaurant. And it was wonderful. It was simply wonderful to begin. As I listened to them and to me, I knew why I was there.

But that was only part of the amazing week. I've talked about these stories in the thesis; I want to say a bit more about the rest of the week now. Perhaps 80 of us came together from 17 or so countries. Most people did not know each other. I had been part of the small group who had worked before hand to plan the global learning village that gathered at Borl that year. The week was magical. A learning village shimmered into existence. I felt deep wonderment about what invites magic into a gathering and allows those present to reach into a field of energy that is often not accessible.

We gathered at Borl and a village shimmered into existence. People journeyed from 17 countries to stand in the space and to will the village into view. To scatter fairy dust and let the unseen come to life.

A handful of people had invited each other to make the plans for the space. Many of us had known each other and had met in circle from time to time these past two years. Some met face-to-face in Hungary in April

We invited a few others to join us in constructing the basic principles of the space and to plan the inviting.

We became a working council for the village that was yet to be seen. Cleaning bricks and cutting carrots and singing songs.

We gathered at Borl early. Many were tired. We spoke of the need to give ourselves, and others, the time to arrive.

We met in circles under the trees from time to time to finish planning for the opening of the space and the seeding of the village. An hour here, two hours there. An invitation was extended to any who also wished to step into this hosting space, and others began to arrive.

Work began to distribute itself among the village now beginning to form. Some made welcome banners. Some organized food and cleaning. Some planned the beginning of the space. And, again, any beginning to arrive were invited to join in. There was strength in the center to invite in the periphery.

At breakfast people mostly unknown to each other arrived in small, tentative and quiet groups. The village had not arrived. Then, as the morning awoke, the fire started. The drums started. More conversation started. And a circle game of first one and then five balls and then figuring out how to pass them differently.

A circle formed on the grass to tell a bit of the story of the village. Different voices were heard. Then, a break and the circle reformed on the uneven cobblestones of the castle courtyard. More voices spoke and sang of the essence of the gathering. People were called to circle with a simple question. What brought you here?

The oldest near seventy. The youngest near birth.

Lunch was held, with a spacious break and the circle was formed for a third time. This time in Knight's Hall. Today's question was simple. What is the work of the village? How will it be done? Who will do it?



No cast of servants here. People stepped forward into tasks already defined and also defined more. No one worried that some might do more of one thing and less of others. Some needed to rest. Some needed to clean showers. All did the work of the village.

Abundance. (Bob's journal, July 13, 2002)

It was an incredible week. Magic did happen. And the question of what caused magic to occur in a field of people gathered together was active in my imagination for the rest of the year.

I left Borl and traveled to Zagreb where I would work with the staff of Horizon for a week, and collect Ante's story. Synchronicity had moved again, and I arrived just as Horizon was hitting a crisis. It was no longer a small family business; the initial enthusiasms of start-up had passed; they had work to do. And they were having difficulties with each other. I spent a week creating the space in which they could talk with each other. I would listen, ask questions, and occasionally point out different things. Mostly, I simply held the space for them so they could speak what was important. And I collected Ante's story. I felt deeply honored to be with this group of young social entrepreneurs.

I came back from Europe, spent a little more than a week at home and left in late July for Hollyhock again – gathering with my

North American tribe. There was no magic at Hollyhock for me that year. I could not find the magic. I found a gathering of old friends who I was very happy to see, but I could not find the magic I had tasted at Castle Borl. At Borl we had begun to develop a dance between what we called the center and the rim. We had also spoken of what we called the periphery. We said that there were specific characteristics of each. The center was where the people doing the actual, visible work stood. The rim was where those who were supporting them in many ways stood. The periphery was the surrounding field of people engaged in the activity. One could move, fluidly, from one space to another with the assumption that one would attend to the particular responsibilities of each space.

At the Hollyhock Invitational there was a small and fairly closed group that organized the space and invited guests. It was more like a thoughtfully hosted party than an open learning village. It was delightful to be at Hollyhock and have wonderful individual conversations with people, to soak in the beauty of Cortes Island and to wonder about all around me. It was a different kind of space than the global learning village at Borl – and without the magic.

I had a Company of Friends gathering in late August. Words I wrote on a foggy morning in the hills of Sonoma captured some of my wonderment of the time.

Fog closes in what we see.

Except the broad bird here, hidden visible among the grasses.

Beyond a way of thinking about the universe to ways of knowing it, to ways of being in it – ways of participating in it.

Ways.

The activism of transformation, not the activism of change.

Is participation in the universe the integrative frame beyond thinking and knowing, beyond being and doing?

Participation

Doing my part

Respecting the parts of others

Beyond human fulfillment

Beyond fulfillment of all species to right relationship with all material and non material beings.

I flew home to Spokane from this meeting of the Company of Friends, it was late at night. I recall being in a small plane on the route from Seattle to Spokane, meditating on the conversations of the last several days. I dropped into a zone in which I felt surrounded by a bubble. Beyond the bubble, I felt the presence, awareness and watching of many nonmaterial beings. Tears came to my eyes as I realized I did not feel alone. I felt accompanied, and whole. I had never, ever, really thought of myself as being alone. But, unbidden, came this thought, this voice, this energy

that said I was not alone. It was then that my definition of spirituality shifted to a vision of coming into right relationship with all material and nonmaterial beings.

In September I made my first trip to Mexico for the annual meeting of Pioneers of Change. We would meet outside of Mexico City in Acamboro, Alfredo's home where his family had built a small hotel, now unused, years before. People gathered, more from the Americas and fewer from Africa and Europe, and we spent a week as another global learning village, seeing what we could learn with one another. Cire and I had hoped that he would be at this meeting. Last minute visa problems kept him away. But it was a lovely gathering all the same.

In the middle of the week we climbed to the top of a cerro behind Acamboro – a hill standing guard over the city.

Much buzzes around inside me, atop this cerro atop Acamboro. Quiet does not come as I sit here upon this rock wall.

So this is Mexico. Same as, and different from, so many other lands. Why am I here? What am I learning?

I came to fall in love again and again and again. With Zaid. With Mille. With Dania. With Alfredo. With Tatiana. With Jean and Jenna and Alok. With Patricia and Shannon and Leon and Sean. With Luciana and Max and Donovan. I came to fall in love and to stand in support and experiment and inquiry and wonder with them.

Time and time again, it is not about doing something to change the world. It is about doing the

work to find ourselves. To find our calling of this moment each moment and to find the courage to follow the calling. To overcome and stay within our uncertainties and fears.

I feel like I live in so many worlds right now – almost parallel universes. Much of me does think "we're screwed." I see no way out. Collapse will not surprise me. And, yet, I live my everydays as if this all will continue. I worry about not having enough money and make plans for tomorrow and live part of my life as if it will go on forever. And it will, but in what form?

This grief I feel. And this tiredness. What about them? I do feel closer to grief and more distance from joy these days. I wonder how much of that is also just tiredness. (Bob's journal, September 25, 2002)

I recall walking around a bit more. Looking at flowers.

Listening to the breezes. Watching the clouds on the horizon. And then I wrote some more.

Hilltop children laugh and shout and scamper  
But this age is passing.  
Grasses blown in the wind, mindless in the  
breeze.  
But this age is ending.  
Dogs bark, cows chew, but this age is over.  
How does it matter what time it is?  
Each day children laugh, wind blows, dogs bark  
and cows chomp.  
Each day birds sing, goats nicker and parents  
worry.  
Each day children die, the air is poisoned, young  
boys grown old are thrown in jail.  
Each day the wails of despair and cries of  
nothingness pierce the heart of the world.  
How does it matter what time it is?  
What matters are my choices. My choices for  
me. My choices for how I live my life.  
What matters are those I know enough to love.  
Those whose inherent relatedness to me I have  
seen in my relatedness to them.

What matters are those children's voices and  
these blades of grace dancing in the wind.  
It is now. That is what time it is. And it  
matters. It always has. For those who are  
able to see.

And of the wholeness of me. Frail and strong.  
Courageous and afraid. Honest and  
deceitful. Transparent and hidden. In  
community and separate. Engaged and  
bored. Present and not. Caring and  
careless.

All these things mixed together in this bag of  
consciousness that is me.

And they are all okay. Hell, they're better than  
okay. Just as joy accompanies grief, so  
each of these accompany the other – and  
accompany me.

Notice the whole of who you are Bob. Embrace  
the wholeness of who you are. Accept that  
there is part of you deceitful and part of  
you afraid. You don't have to act from it,  
but you must acknowledge its company  
and embrace it in the whole of you.

Breezes atop the cerro.

Acamoro. (Bob's journal, September 25, 2002)

Powerful wonderings. I had conversations late into the night  
and many exchanges of hugs and smiles. Through it all, a  
question that continued to dwell in me was the one about what  
invites magic in.

For me, it was a good meeting, but there was no magic.  
Some of the same processes and procedures were followed that had  
been used at Borl, but, somehow, the magic didn't come in. I  
think part of the reason was because there were unresolved  
tensions in the Pioneer's cultivation unit. It is hard, very hard, to

hold a global network together, with a distributed leadership team and severely limited resources. The members of the cultivation unit, for a variety of reasons, individually set aside their discontents and disillusionments with each other and “ran the meeting.” Things went smoothly. But the magic didn’t come in. At the end of the week, after others had gone, I sat with them and we talked about what had happened and what had not. And the discontents and disillusionments surfaced.

What’s so interesting to me is that they were able to hold and handle the different personal issues pretty well. And we were able to talk about how the underlying presence of these issues had been an undertone for the entire week and was one of the key factors that may have contributed to the lack of magic.

My mind and my heart have been in these questions of what are the conditions that support us in coming together in new ways, ways that allow new possibilities to emerge and to be held and explored? What is the larger field of work that needs attending to on the planet right now and what are the patterns of interconnection that allow us to live into that field? How do we serve in these fields as leaders, especially on distributed teams, and how do we invite the magic in?

The final months of the year sped by. We had an important Berkana Board meeting in November, after which I collected Marianne's and Manish's stories. I not yet gathered Cire's story and my intuition told me not to begin working with the stories until were collected.

Of course, that did not mean that my mind and heart had ceased their wondering. We had another Company of Friends gathering at the end of the year. At one time we went off separately to see what poetry was trying to come through us.

What is the question that guides my life?  
What is the question that gives me sight?  
What is the question that gives me might?  
What might it be, I wonder aloud?  
What might it be, I wonder in clouds?  
How do I take this bundle of me?  
These thoughts and these fears and these hopes  
and these prayers?  
This mixture of ego and insight and care?  
What is it that I must dare?  
Perhaps it is here, all around me again.  
Perhaps it is simply the place where I swim.  
The courage to take each day as it comes.  
Trusting the trust of a God who is one.  
I am here for a reason.  
The reason unfolds.  
Inviting me onward at the close of each day.  
I'm not in charge here but I have to show up.  
And trust the unfolding, because unfold it must.  
I must be global.  
I cannot be small.  
One world unfolding, encompassing us all.  
A daughter to raise.  
A life to live.  
I hold these too, with so much to give



Where are the markers?  
Where is the trail?  
Where do the winds blow as I set sail?  
Journey not ending.  
A voyage begun.  
Each day unfolding the God who is one.  
Trust myself and this Company of Friends.  
Trust once more and again and again.  
The future uncertain, the path incomplete.  
Each step a question with no retreat.  
Where am I going? Where do I dare?  
How do I know if I end up somewhere?  
Life is a mystery, unknown to us all  
Trusting in God that I'll be caught when I fall.  
So, my fear is that I may have to get a job and  
give up my work. Part of me thinks it is  
unable to release into the mystery of "it  
will be okay." When am I being foolish  
and willful and can I trust that I will  
know? How can this Company of Friends  
help me?  
I too am a force of nature. A force of nature is  
unmediated; it doesn't have a direction.  
(Bob's journal, December 17, 2002)

*2003*

I remember that I was very tired by the end of 2002. It had been a long year with many adventures to deepen into the journey of my life. I remember looking towards 2003, unsure of how I would muster the energy for all I saw before me.

After Christmas on a short family break, I had a skiing accident. As one friend of mine later said, "spirit gave Bob a speeding ticket." I placed a three quarter inch depression in my

tibial plateau, created two hairline fractures in my tibia and compressed it as well. A week later I was gifted with a metal plate, seven screws and someone else's bone material to fill the depression. I spent a full month in bed, spending eight hours a day hooked to a machine that bent my leg. Pain pills made watching videos and sleeping my main activities. During the second month I learned how to move around on crutches and in a wheel chair. Whatever thinking I was doing was going on in the far back of my mind.

But Tim and Una and Zoë had called a meeting in the north of England to gather people to talk about a big idea for 2004. I knew I was supposed to be there, if at all possible. So, with crutches and wheelchairs and friends to meet and greet me, I made my way from Spokane to England. As I sat in this circle of 20 or so people from about the same number of countries, as I have recounted elsewhere in this thesis, I found tears streaming down my cheeks as I said I have come because it is in your company that I remember who I am.

By early 2003, all the stories were collected for this thesis. I'd listened to them and transcribed them and listened and read them again. They were always there, present in the corners of my heart and mind.

2003 was a year filled with challenges. It was a time when we were deconstructing and reconstructing Berkana Institute. It was a time when Pioneers of Change was going through its own struggles about how to find its way in the world. Our Company of Friends had come to a time of rest – we did not meet at all in 2003. The Hollyhock Invitational was not held in 2003. I journeyed back to Europe in July to work with Horizon in Zagreb, to come to the learning village at Castle Borl, and to go to an incredible week-long party in Prague where Mille Bojer from Pioneers of Change was married. In the fall Susan came with me to the Pioneers of Change summer school in Egypt on the Sinai Peninsula.

During the year I continued to work with the stories I had harvested for this inquiry. I continued to read different books and articles that came to my attention. I began to find the meaning in the stories I had collected and the materials I had been reading. A paragraph here and a chapter there, this thesis was written from around the world. I sit here now, on my winter lanai on Maui, watching waves crash off Napili Point and realizing what a blessed life I have been living as these questions have lived and grown within me.

The product of my reflections and wonderings in 2003 is this thesis.

By the time the year ended, Berkana was completely deconstructed and we were beginning to help the new emerge. New Stories had not tried to attract new clients in 18 months. Neither place had funds to pay me. One teaching contract I had was not renewed because of personal clashes with the program director. On January 1, 2004, for the first time in my life, I filed for unemployment.

I feel strangely relaxed in all this uncertainty. I am doing the work I am called to. I do it within a wide community of very close colleagues and friends. My immediate family supports me and what I do. Meditation, while still not a regular part of my daily life, comes more frequently now. I am finding my own enspirited leadership and am more and more aware of the core assumptions I carry forward. I am deeply connected in many ways to experiences of life in other cultures and I am beginning a new exploration to uncover my own local work in Spokane. I am blessed. These themes in my own life are the themes I found in the lives of my co-researchers. As with other aspect of this work, these themes have arisen in me as I have stayed in relationship with them. I can say, with utmost honest and deepest thanks that I could not live my life as I live it today without the relationships I have with my co-researchers and that we have with a range of like-hearted people.

The image that I carried with me into a January 2004  
Berkana Board meeting is that my life right now is a blank canvas  
and I have many brightly colored tubes of paint.

Let the picture arise!

## CHAPTER FOUR – LITERATURE REVIEW

As I have worked with these leaders and their centres and the emerging themes I have seen, I have tried to understand the larger pattern of where their work fits with what is going on in the world today. Acknowledging my own worldview, as described in the first chapter, I have tried to deepen my own understanding of the global context of the work of these centres.

In this chapter I will share some of the literature which helped to both enlarge and focus my thinking. Many of the references cited in this chapter are resources I was introduced to through conversations with my co-researchers and other colleagues. This literature review co-evolved with my story collection and discovery of themes. All parts of the work informed each other, and the whole.

When I began to organize this review, six related sections emerged:

Local Transforms Global

Patterns of Interconnection

Emergence and Self-Organization

Higher-Order Consciousness

New Leadership

New Social Movements

illuminate the themes I found in my co-researcher's stories and the characteristics and qualities of leadership embedded in their work.

Just as the themes section of this thesis emerged as I sat with the stories presented in chapter three, the categories here emerged as I used my feelings, intuition and thinking to consider the literature I had read. Since my review of literature took place throughout the time I was writing my dissertation proposal, collecting the stories, sitting with the stories, and beginning to write this thesis, it is best to think of these categories, and the material in each category, as co-evolved with the all the work presented in this thesis.

In presenting them here, I have attempted to find a logical sequence. But this presentation is not a chain of causality.

Rather, I think of these six as different windows on the lives and work of these leaders.

Looking through these windows (and sometimes feeling like I must try to look through all six at precisely the same time to get a full view) I began to see a story of the so-called “developed” world. This old story that I saw was one where the dominant cultural myth or belief was that the second half of the 20th century ushered in a period of unparalleled economic growth. I discussed this story in chapter one, but to give a quick review, it was the old story of resources available globally for those who had the money and the power to acquire them. Material prosperity was something that could be spread in ever widening circles, eventually reaching all people on the planet.

This old story has started to disintegrate. More people believe that the degradation, destruction and destabilization of our planet’s eco-systems must be stopped. There is an increasing sense that material progress and quality of life are not the same and that, indeed, different people and different cultures define quality of life differently. A new story is beginning to emerge that includes

1. A belief that change happens only locally and that, perhaps transformation happens only globally;



2. The development of new patterns in life through which interconnections transcend old boundaries;
3. Across these interconnections, an experience of emergence, a reaching with both intention and openness into a new field of possibilities;
4. In these fields the presence of what might be called a higher-order or planetary consciousness;
5. The development of new kinds of leadership which have different qualities than those associated with leadership in the past;
6. From this leadership, the possible birth of a new type of social movement in these times.

These six phenomena have emerged together over the last 50 years. Numerous scholars have written extensively in each of these areas. Since my first days as a student at CIIS a great deal of our course work directly and indirectly touched on these areas. Each of these six phenomena is a dissertation area itself and it is not my intent in this thesis to provide an exhaustive review any of these phenomena.

In the pages which follow, however, I will share some of the ideas that struck me as significant in the literature I reviewed.

## Local Transforms Global

One key question is how might a different quality of life be achieved? How might we, in both the developed and underdeveloped worlds learn to live differently, with less emphasis on material wealth?

Some, including the young leaders described in this dissertation, believe that change will come at the local level. In words, and in action, they argue that global transformation will come because local people have begun to create meaningful new ways of living and because local people, like the Chiapas, say they have had enough of exploitation. As noted in the themes section of this thesis, they believe local work – not global schemes and master plans – will lead to sustainable change. This view is supported by some very interesting literature.

Gustavo Esteva and Madhu Suri Prakash (1998) do a remarkable job of challenging notions of global culture. They argue that so-called modern, industrialized societies operate as a recolonizing force on the rest of the world. They call this, compellingly, “The Global Project,” meaning both (a) the programs and policies of governments in industrialized countries and (b) global corporations and institutions supporting a global integration of economies and markets. (p. 16)

The authors, in particular, challenge three underlying meta-constructs: global thinking, the myth of the individual self and the universality of human rights. I believe these three constructs stand near the center of the notion that transformative change will come from the local level.

Esteva and Prakash (1998) suggest that so-called global thinking is an illusion which has been used to justify a wide range of behaviors and actions which are detrimental to the populations of many local cultures.

Their position is a challenge for me. After all, 30 years ago I co-designed an Environmental Symposium Series at a World's Fair and grew into middle age with the slogan "Think globally, act locally." What is it Esteva and Prakash (1998) are saying? What are the young leaders I have worked with in this inquiry saying when they chose [www.localtransformsglobal.net](http://www.localtransformsglobal.net) as the internet address for a network of centres like theirs? What was Manish saying in a recent conversation when he pushed me hard on where my local work is these days? I think this is very tricky territory because it requires such a deep reframing. Esteva and Prakash say "those who think locally do not twist the humble satisfaction of belonging to the cosmos into the arrogance of pretending to know

what is good for everyone and to attempt to control the world.” (p. 27)

I think they are on to something important would go so far as to say change does not happen until it happens in a home, a backyard, a village, a neighborhood or a community. It doesn't happen until someone lives her or his life differently.

Steven Johnson (2001), writing on the phenomena of emergence strikes a similar theme when he says that it is local information that leads to global wisdom(p. 79). The global form of any system takes shape, according to Johnson, based on the ways neighbors in that system interact with each other – “they think locally and act locally, but their collective action produces global behavior.” (p. 74)

I have come to believe that anything truly important has to be simultaneously local and global and that while change happens locally, transformation happens only when those local changes are interconnected. Often times our orientation is to think that bigger is better, and more important. In this light, it has become natural to believe that global thinking is the most important, but perhaps this is not the case.

Edgar Morin and Anne Brigitte Kern (1999) suggest

the complex formula of anthropolitics is not limited to the injunction, “think globally, act locally” but is rather expressed in the coupling of *think globally/act locally* with *think locally/act globally*. Planetary thinking ceases opposing the universal and the concrete, the general and the singular. (p 131)

Morin, in another work (2003) invites us to go far beyond the old thinking that the whole is greater than the sum of the parts.

He suggests that while this is sometimes true, it is also sometimes true that the whole is less than the sum of the parts, that the whole is greater than the whole, that the parts are at once less and greater than the parts, that the parts are sometimes greater than the whole, that the whole is less than the whole, that the whole is insufficient, and that the whole contains uncertainty. (pp. 6-8)

What an extraordinary reframe! Part of its extraordinary nature is that it lets uncertainty loose. It embraces ambiguity. It invites us to look deeper into the substance of an experience rather than trying to understand it through some structural lens where the whole is always greater.

The challenge before us is to learn to hold global and local thinking at the same time and to allow each to inform the other. I think the authors I have quoted referenced in this section are telling us that global trends will not be changed globally. They will

be changed locally. They will not be changed through global models, or development of global policies. They will change because local people make changes and are effectively connected globally with each other. My co-researchers have embodied this notion in their work.

One place where Esteva and Prakash's (1998) thinking about the primacy of the local shows up with deep clarity – and clarity which is a challenge for me – is with respect to human rights. They suggest that any attempt to establish and impose a universal code of human rights is simply another form of belligerent or kindly colonialism and totalitarianism. What they call for is a deep knowing of the other. They call for a respectful knowing which acknowledges that there is no such thing as a single cultural practice – only practices that grow out of an intricate web of relationships, rituals, beliefs and ways of being in the world. In no way do they ascribe either purity or perfection to the practices of any culture, including the torch-bearers of universal human rights. What they say, in essence, is let us meet each other respectfully, in deep conversation and learn and change together.

This hospitality to another culture, daring audaciously to re-cognize it in its radical difference and therefore to respect it, demands profound humility; to re-cognize one's own limits, the scope of every form of intelligibility of the world. It requires learning to see

the other culture without necessarily admiring it. One cannot really see the Other without respect. This respect must be assumed as a condition for love. Neither respect nor love implies blindness, inaction or indifference to the Other's perversions or wrongs. Quite the opposite: it calls for moving passionately to perceive it, as an expression of difference; and, perhaps, even to attempt correcting it, following the urge to shorten distances, but without sacrificing respect and love. (p. 129)

They also add that their position in no way sidesteps the need for local people to condemn abhorrent acts of rape, torture, humiliation or malnutrition. They argue that these must be dealt with from inside the perpetrating culture, by the people who live there, not through external force. (Esteva & Prakash, 1998, p. 142)

These three central issues raised by Esteva and Prakash invite me to rethink many of my past beliefs. They claim that the really important work is what is done locally. They say this work – if it is important and if it endures – it is never done by a single individual – it is done by a community. They say that each of these communities will sometimes behave in ways that challenge the mores and assumptions of other communities and that we must develop new, cooperative ways of learning from each other and holding each other accountable. These are challenging concepts which invite me to ask what is my local work? What are

my communities? Where is the lack of humanity in the ways I express my human rights?

The work of Esteva and Prakash (1998) springs from some of the same concerns Gandhi (2000) expressed when he wrote an epic on self-rule in 1909 on a ten-day voyage returning from England to South Africa. Then forty years old Gandhi laid out his deep underlying philosophy and understanding of freedom and self-rule with a profound simplicity and elegance. He says with humility we all might aspire to practice,

these views are mine, and yet not mine. They are mine because I hope to act according to them. They are almost a part of my being. But, yet, they are not mine, because I can lay no claim to originality. (p. 10)

Gandhi (2000) asks fundamental questions about what civilisation is, and what it means to India. The arguments Gandhi makes foretell the themes which will be offered by Esteva and Prakash 90 years later. Imposition of one set of cultural values on top of another culture, regardless of motivation, is a destructive, barbarous act. Gandhi sees Britain's imposition of what their civilisation upon India to be a barbarous act and he further questions how civilised British civilisation actually is.

My eyes water and my throat gets parched. I have grave doubts whether I shall be able to sufficiently explain what is in my heart. It is my deliberate opinion that India is being ground down not under the



English heel but under that of modern civilisation. (p. 42)

Gandhi (2000) laments the intrusion of so called modern civilization into India. He sees it as the source of the loss of spirituality and religion in India and in the world. He claims it is responsible for a move away from healthy living to simply ravaging and then ignoring our bodies, except to cover up problems with the application of western medicines. (pp. 61-68)

Time and time again, Gandhi (2000) makes the point that it is not the British who offend him; it is the tyranny of oppression of western civilisation as it manifests itself in India. “That we should obey laws whether they are bad or good is a new-fangled notion.” (p. 91) In Gandhi’s view, the British laws and institutions are inappropriate for India. The British are welcome to remain in his country, respectful of Indian culture and Indian laws. Self-rule means that local laws and customs prevail. They may draw on ideas and experience from beyond their borders, but the borders are their own. Life and identity are inherently local.

Gandhi, Esteva & Prakash, Sachs and other writers all argue that we need locally driven change processes which grow from local needs and opportunities.

Margaret Wheatley (1992) adds to this argument when she writes that

acting locally allows us to be inside the movement and flow of the system, participating in all those complex events occurring simultaneously. We are more likely to be sensitive to the dynamics of this system. And thus more effective. However, changes in small places also affect the global system, not through incrementalism, but because every small system participates in an unbroken wholeness. Activities in one part of the whole create effects that appear in distance places. Because of these unseen connections, there is potential value in working anywhere in the system. (p. 45)

How can all this local work be connected? What is needed if local actions are to weave themselves into a global pattern? What are the patterns which can begin to let us see the rich diversity of difference in the world and to honor it as a critical asset in our evolution of a quality of life on this planet?

When we met together in Prague in January of 2002, one of the most clear, common themes was that my co-researchers and their colleagues are drawn first and foremost to work that is on-the-ground, local and place-based. Many have spent significant portions of their lives involved in various forms of global work. Each has been called to work at the local level. And the localness of their work has been a key aspect of the sense of calling.

In conversations and in published and unpublished writings they have made it clear that while their concentration is on the local work that stands before them, they also believe that when their work is combined with others it has the potential for global impact. And, in addition, because it is grounded, its global outreach has authenticity.

This sense has come not from a theoretical position, but has come from following a sense of calling. As my co-researchers have come across the kinds of literature reviewed, above, they have felt an immediate sense of deep resonance. It is as if they have found additional words and concepts to explain that which they already sense and feel.

### Patterns of Interconnection

In modern industrialized culture we have gotten very good about building boxes and boundaries around ourselves. We build them to establish and assert our own individuality as separate selves. We build them around our communities and our nation states. We build them around our businesses and corporations. Our boundaries serve an important purpose: they help us define and claim our own integrity.

In this time of change we need to reach beyond our boundaries. We need to look for the patterns that connect us and give us life.

Christopher Alexander spent many years as an architect working to discover what it is that makes one building come “alive” while another is not. Alexander (1979) suggests that we all know what it is like to come into a room or a space that is alive. If our senses are open, we can feel the aliveness – just as we can feel the deadness of other spaces. He points out that the same elements occur again and again in buildings – doors, windows, corridors, walls – or in outside places – paths, entrances, roads, intersections, boundaries. But it is not these elements that make a building or a space come alive, but rather the relationship or pattern among the elements. It is the pattern that gives life, that provides vibrancy, which releases magic.

What are the patterns that give life in these times? How do we find them and build on them? How do we do what Jane Jacobs (1961) argued for many years ago in cities: look for the patterns from urban streets that are working, and build from them? (pp. 360-361)

Mark Gerzon (2003) looks at patterns and relationships in his attempt to understand the emergence of global leadership. He

challenges us to reach out from behind our personal borders as well as our territorial borders to find new patterns of relationship with each other. He describes five aspects of this journey to recognize new patterns: integrity, learning, dialogue, bridging and synergy.

Integrity deals with integral vision, systems thinking and self-awareness. In our collective search to better understand what is happening these days we all construct boundaries all the time. The whole universe is simply too large to hold in our consciousness, so we construct boundaries to hold on to smaller parts. If we learn to walk with deep integrity, we are able to “pick better boundaries.” Effective leadership needs to reach to the whole and to work with a mindfulness of the integrity of the whole. “These boundaries themselves are not the problem,” Gerzon says, The problem “is ignorance about them and identification with them.” (Gerzon, 2003, p. 33)

Learning is about our capacity to inquire, listen and learn. And it is about our capacity to do so with integrity. It means “inquiring into the unknown, listening to what is said, and witnessing those who are different from ourselves.” (Gerzon, 2003, p. 47) What is essential is that we begin to learn to ask real questions that matter – questions which, even in the asking, let

alone in the answering, can shake us out of our tendency to simply seek confirmation of what we already know. (pp. 55-56)

Dialogue is what must flow from our learning if we hope to effect any sort of large scale change. Dialogue for Gerzon (2003) is all about respect, compassion and empowerment. When we develop the capacity to listen and to speak deeply to each other, sharing from the depths of our souls in a way that reaches across barriers that we have allowed to divide us, we have developed the conditions for meaningful dialogue. (p. 70) Through dialogue we can find ways to respect each other, to develop real understanding and compassion for the condition of our separate lives, and to seek to deeply empower each other and ourselves.

Through the process of deep dialogue, it is possible to build bridges, which becomes Gerzon's (2003) fourth pathway. He suggests that almost all leaders see themselves as bridge-builders. Such construction leads to inclusion, citizenship and democracy. Gerzon hopes for the emergence of a "worldcentric" global citizenship which acknowledges that the world is one whole, integral system. (p. 111) He hopes we will come to a time of global democracy which embraces the rights and dignity of all people and all aspects of the natural world. (p. 118)

Finally, Gerzon calls for a synergy of justice, sustainability and community to bring all of these forces together.

These five pathways – integrity, learning, dialogue, bridging and synergy – seem to me to represent a pattern of connection that we are being collectively called towards and which the young leaders I have described in this inquiry have intuitively embraced.

There is one more critical aspect of this pattern I would add to Gerzon's five. It is the notion of abundance. We are connected in a world where there is enough.

More than 30 years ago Robert Theobald (1970) suggested that we would alter our sense of economics radically if we began to think of what we needed as existing in abundance rather than scarcity. Bernard Lietaer (2001) posits that our current construction of currencies is based on allocating scarce resources. Some past cultures have been based on the exchange of abundance. Edgar Cahn (2000) offers a similar argument when he suggests that we have an abundance of human resources and need only to find better ways to release that abundance. John Kretzmann and John McKnight (1993) argue that our entire approach to community development should be revised to build on our assets (a way of measuring our abundance) rather than simply looking at how to overcome our deficits. The work of appreciative

inquiry developed by David Cooperrider and others (1999) is part of this same way of thinking.

A unifying theme in all these works is that there is enough to go around. Our basic needs, and more, can be met when we learn to work together. A new pattern begins to emerge when we approach each other with integrity and learn our way into the future. Synergies are created that we cannot imagine in advance.

Much of my work, and that of my co-researchers in this study is a quest to see and give voice to a new, emerging pattern of wholeness that is alive. Christopher Alexander (1979) suggests that we cannot know the whole when we begin. The whole is something that must emerge. However, we can pay attention to patterns which are more likely to create wholeness, to the elements that must be in right relationship with each other for wholeness to emerge. He suggests that if we find the language to pay attention to these critical patterns, and come with a deep spiritual presence, the rest will emerge.

The young leaders I am working with are in search of these essential patterns. They seem to live from the belief that if we can find the essential, and build from it, our lives on this planet and our relationship to the planet can be transformed. They are not looking for simply a theoretical pattern, but for one that has the



kind of vitality Alexander speaks of when he talks about how we all know when we come into a room that is “alive.” What is the pattern that gives vibrancy to these times?

Margaret Wheatley (1992) points out that for the last three centuries we have been planning, predicting, analyzing and trying to control the world around us. We have maintained that we live in a predictable universe where we need only determine a cause and trace out its effects. (p. 28)

It is time now to release ourselves from that model and to begin to notice what is really happening around us. When we do so, we notice that relationship and connection are vital. Wheatley (1992) points out that

many authors write now on our interior relationship with our spirit, soul, and life’s purpose. Ecological writers stress the relationship that exists not only between us and all beings in our environment, but between us and future generations. (p. 14)

Wheatley goes on to suggest that we are interwoven in a complex set of relationships. We and the systems we are part of are self-organizing. Where we direct our attention and what we choose to notice is important. It is particularly important during unstable, tumultuous times, like these, because disequilibrium, not balance, gives impetus to growth and change. She suggests we begin to pay attention to what is actually going on around us and

to that which we wish to emerge. In other words, we are not captives to a pre-determined future, but participants in creating one – an idea which Robert Theobald advocated beginning in the early seventies. (Theobald, 1968, 1970, 1972a, 1972b, 1976, 1992, 1997, 1999; Theobald & Mills, 1973; Theobald & Scott, 1972)

The conditions for change are created when we collectively define what we want to happen. We can do this unconsciously, or we can choose to do it consciously. If we do it consciously, Wheatley and Theobald would have us become aware of the systems in which we work, aware of the values and principles currently guiding them and of the values and principles we wish to bring to bear. By becoming aware of the current patterns – the ways things are connected – we have an opportunity to change them.

What is it that creates the patterns of interconnection that weave local work into a global whole? To what extent must these patterns be tended to, and to what extent can one simply rely on the patterns to establish themselves? Each of my co-researchers would, I believe, answer these and similar questions slightly differently. Some are more concerned than others about the patterns of interconnection. Most become engrossed in their local work that days and weeks sometimes go by before they raise their

eyes and look out further. The people and situations directly at their feet are filled with many possibilities and require constant attention.

All speak with a similar voice, however, when it comes to the importance of the connections which bring them together with each other and together with others who support them in this work. I think there are important questions about what makes those connections livelier, more filled with learning, more frequent and more supportive.

The work of the young leaders chronicled in this inquiry is opening the way for new patterns to emerge. Their orientation is so much like the gentle man and spiritual warrior to whom I dedicated this dissertation. Theobald's message is simple and straight forward: we'll get there together, or not at all. We need to wake up to, and begin to act out of, things many of us have known since the middle of the last century: resources do have limits; growing gaps between rich and poor are immoral and lead to greater disasters; degraded and polluted eco-systems fail; new decision making-processes are needed to gather our collective intelligence. (Theobald, 1992, 1997)

## Emergence, Self-Organization and Fields

Emergence and self-organization are key ideas in understanding the ways in which local efforts may coalesce into a pattern of interconnection that has global implications. Steven Johnson (2001) looks at the behavior of ants, cells, software developers and cities to describe these two concepts. Emergence is the phenomena through which the characteristics of the whole grow in an organic way from the individual parts. Johnson formulates five rules for successful emergence in ant colonies:

1. Large numbers are essential. The larger the number of ants, the more likely self-organization.
2. Ignorance is useful. Ants don't need to understand the whole, just their own neighborhood.
3. Encourage random encounters. Random encounters produce the feedback individual ants require to regulate their behavior which, in turn, aggregates into the action of the colony.
4. Look for patterns in the signs. When viewed from outside the system, a pattern emerges from the individual actions.
5. Pay attention to your neighbors. All necessary information in the ant colony comes from your neighbors – that's all one needs to know.

(pp. 78-79)

Slight changes in the way these five rules are written make them applicable to emergence in human systems: diversity is critical, suspend knowing, experiment, look for patterns in the signs and pay attention to your neighbors.

Johnson's (2001) emphasis on "local" is of particular interest to me. He says

Local turns out to be the key term in understanding the power of swarm logic. We see emergent behavior in systems like ant colonies when the individual agents in the system pay attention to their immediate neighbors rather than wait for orders from above. They think locally and act locally, but their collective action produces global behavior. (p. 74)

Ants pay attention to what's going on around them – they notice the activity in their locale. Their encounters are not planned; individual ants don't need to understand the larger system. But they do need to pay a lot of attention to what their neighbors are doing and to look for patterns in the neighbor's actions that can inform and change their own behavior.

This seems to be very similar to what is going on with the learning centres described in this thesis. The founders have responded to a call to work at the local level and they believe this local work will lead to global transformations. If the learning

leadership centres described in this thesis become part of a growing global network of such centres that are diverse, operate from a place of unknowing, are experimental, look for new patterns and are locally grounded, perhaps something global will emerge.

The question, of course, is what is required in order for local work to precipitate global changes? Johnson (2001) points out, for example, that a snowflake is capable of self-organizing itself into a multitude of exquisite shapes, but is not capable of becoming a smarter snowflake or a more creative one. “There is great power and creative energy in self-organization, to be sure, but it needs to be channeled toward specific forms for it to blossom into something like intelligence.” (p. 119)

What causes the work of these individual leaders and separate centres to blossom into a global pattern which alters current destructive behaviors? Self-organization seems to flow, in part, from attending to some core building blocks like defining basic identity, clarifying purpose, and creating explicit guiding values. But something more seems to be happening with these centres that makes it possible they will be part of a global transformation.

One way of thinking about this greater possibility is to say that there is a broader field that holds and connects them.

Otto Scharmer (2003) from the MIT Leadership Lab<sup>7</sup> addresses the level of individual intention in his work *The Blind Spot of Leadership*. He suggests that most social learning theory focuses on learning from the past. He began to think that “there could be a deeper learning cycle based on one’s sensing of an emerging future, rather than on one’s past experiences.” (p. 3) Scharmer goes on to “argue that in order to learn from the future as it emerges, individuals, groups and institutions have to shift the inner place from which they operate.” (p. 3)

The Fetzer Institute, which supports ongoing work in the field of collective intelligence and spiritual wisdom, issued a report recently which listed 11 practices which support this shift of inner place: listening deeply, clearing, holding the space, trusting intuition, non-attachment, not knowing, non-judgment, art, music, sound and movement, whole body sensing, symbolism and metaphor, and discernment. (Briskin, Strutt, Ott, & Potter, 2001, p. 59) Scharmer’s work parallels the findings of the Fetzer study. He concentrates on the identification of what he calls seven field

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<sup>7</sup> Scharmer has a high commitment to sharing his research on this phenomenon of *The Blind Spot of Leadership*. See <http://www.ottoscharmer.com> and <http://www.dialogueonleadership.org>

structures for attention (paying attention, seeing, sensing, presencing, envisioning, enacting and embodying) and three different movements of awareness (co-sensing, co-inspiring, co-creating.) The core of his work is the concept of presencing which means

liberating one's perceptions from the 'prison' of the past and then letting it operate from the field of the future. This means that you literally shift the place from which your perceptions operate to another vantage point. In practical terms, presencing means that you link yourself in a very real way with your 'highest future possibility' and that you let it come into the present. (Leeb, 2002, p. 1)

Scharmer's work is very exciting. Based on research over a ten year period from 1994 to 2003 in which he interviewed 130 thought leaders from around the world, he suggests we can use a future waiting to be born as a compass to guide our movement forward. What we need to do is learn to tap into this broad field of possibilities. Synchronistically, several of the young leaders described in this thesis have spent time with Scharmer at the annual Shambhala Leadership Institutes in Nova Scotia and he was one of the faculty members Ante Glavas recruited for the business academy.

While Scharmer's work in this area is extensive, many others are looking for a way into this "field" of new possibilities.



For example, Peter Senge refers to Jaworski's and Sheldrake's use of the term "field" and Nonaka's and Nishida's use of the term "ba" as energetic equivalents to quantum or electromagnetic fields where thoughts and actions taken in one place simultaneously are accessible in all places. (Senge, 2001)

Also, Eleanor Rosch, professor of psychology at University of California, Berkeley, in a 1999 interview with Scharmer, speaks of such a field as a place where

intention, body and mind come together, rather than being scattered all this way and that. And you start to be aware of perception happening as it actually does happen from the whole field, not from within a separated perceiver (Scharmer & Rosch, 1999, p. 9)

Years earlier, Csikszentmihalyi mapped this same territory when he described flow experiences in which harmony is brought to consciousness, where thoughts, feelings and actions are fully congruent with one another. (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, p. 217) And, certainly, David Bohm covers similar territory with his descriptions of explicate and implicate reality. (Bohm & Edwards, 1991)

Many people are delving more deeply understand that which is unseen. Lynne McTaggart (2002) has compiled research from an amazing array of sources who have been investigating phenomena associated with fields. Her conclusion is that

a substructure underpins the universe that is essentially a recording medium of everything, providing a means for everything to communicate with everything else. People are indivisible from their environment. Living consciousness is not an isolated entity. It increases order in the rest of the world. The consciousness of human beings has incredible powers, to heal ourselves, to heal the world – in a sense, to make it as we wish it to be. (p. 225)

In the literature I have reviewed, I have begun to develop some of a conceptual framework that describes how the work of these separate centres might intentionally evolve as a living system that has global impact. An assumption that I share with my co-researchers is that while change is local, transformation is global and results from the synergy of many local efforts networked together. Whether such a process is either necessary or sufficient for transformation is an important question to be pursued at another time.

What I can say is that these leaders frequently speak of “the field” in which we are working. This term is often used somewhat loosely and refers to something which is subtly energetic, spiritual, global and awakening. Scharmer’s (2003) work seems to be directly applicable and provides the most comprehensive descriptions of this sense of field. The notion that this field is something that should be grown into in an organic way is also an

idea with which these leaders have an immediate resonance. Meg Wheatley's (1992) ideas about living systems have been immediately attractive to my co-researchers. Four years ago when I and others were launching the global leadership initiative called *From the Four Directions: People Everywhere Leading the Way*, we coined the term *life-affirming leader*. These young leaders and their contemporaries immediately grasped the meaning of the term while some of their older counterparts found it initially perplexing. The concept of a self-organizing, organic system is one that is quickly embraced.

Johnson's (2001) work on emergence is particularly interesting in light of the intuitive emphasis my co-researchers place on local actions growing into global changes.

The territory I cover in this portion of the literature review is one that most of these young leaders have delved into at one time or another as they have looked for conceptual frameworks to underscore their work.

The young leaders I have described in this thesis believe that their local work may possibly lead to global transformation. It seems likely that if such transformation is to occur it will be, in part, because these centres find and follow the patterns in their lives and work and that these patterns lead to the emergence of a

global form. While this emergence, and the self-organization that accompanies it may be guided by some typical and useful organizational strategies including clarification of identity, mission, purpose, values and principles, it is also likely to be guided by something more -- by a field of possibility, by a possible future. This journey requires, I believe, a higher order of consciousness than is normally present in the world today. And I believe the leaders described in this thesis are drawn towards that higher order.

#### Higher-Order Consciousness

So far in this literature review I have suggested that conspicuous consumption of global resources by people in developed countries is driving us towards an ecosystem collapse. I have shared my sense that changes at the local level will be most likely to alter this trend and help us move to a new definition of quality of life which is based on more than material progress. I have gone on to suggest that local work and the patterns emergent from local work need to be connected globally for a transformative change to occur. And, in the previous section, I have looked at what is involved in the phenomena of emergence, self-organization and fields. From what I can tell, all of this points to the need to

have more leaders operating from higher orders of consciousness. A number of authors suggest that a higher order of consciousness is emergent in the world today.

Duane Elgin (2000) calls the various factors contributing to ecological destabilization “adversity trends.” And he says they seem inescapable. He moves us beyond the inescapable by calling for a “new perceptual paradigm,” a dramatically different way of viewing the world.

Peter Russell (1995) suggests that there is a global consciousness awakening at this time on the planet. Chris Bache (2000) believes we’re in for a rough time, but many of us will get through it, together, and move to a higher level of collective consciousness. Bache refers to the array of prophecies that point to 2012 as a year of bifurcation in which a major shift will be made. He believes we are here, as cosmic beings, present on earth to take us through this next shift. It is the purpose of our lives on this planet at this time, and some of us are more conscious of it than others.

The views of these three authors and others resonate deeply with those of the young leaders I have engaged in this dissertation. Their work is based in part on the notion that now is the time to

hunker down and learn with and from each other about how to construct life differently, from its local roots.

Thomas Kuhn (1962) suggests that such major shifts in worldview typically occur at times of breakdown when a new way of thinking takes hold. Others, like Morris Berman (2000), suggest that a change of paradigm is insufficient and that what's called for is a new receptivity to somatic ways of knowing. Both would concur, I think, that we are at a period of time when such shifts are likely to occur.

One way of characterizing these and other perspectives is to say that we are being called to a higher order of consciousness.

This higher order of consciousness seems similar to what Peter Reason (1994) labels as future participation:

a form of consciousness rooted in concrete experience and grounded in the body; characterized by self-awareness and self-reflection; experience is ordered through a sense of pattern and form rather than discrete objects... self-aware and self-reflective; immersed in a seamless web, and beyond the world of separate objects into a world of pattern and form, of relationships in an interdependent whole; and, the active and conscious use of imagination. (pp. 33-35)

This concept of Reason's (1994) seems very related to Wheatley's (1992) argument that

the survival and growth of systems that range in size from large ecosystems down to the smallest microbial colonies are sustained by a few key principles that

express the system's overall identity combined with high levels of autonomy for individuals within that system. (p. 13)

She goes on to say that "there is another important paradox in living systems: Each organism maintains a clear sense of its individual identity within a larger network of relationships that helps shape its identity." (p. 20)

What Reason (1994) and Wheatley (1992) both seem to be saying is that the more we are self-aware and self-reflective about our own individual identity and to the extent that we are able to sense the much larger set of relationships in which our identity is immersed, we are more able "to participate in the great mystery of creation as a centre of consciousness within the cosmos." (Reason, 1994, p. 30)

The concept of "meaning perspectives" as introduced by Jack Mezirow (1991) suggests one possible set of steps for how we move from a more narrow meaning perspective to a broader one. His approach is more rigid than the approaches described by Wheatley and Reason, but covers similar territory. He defines meaning perspectives as "the generalized sets of habitual expectation which act as perceptual and conceptual codes to form, limit, and distort how we think, believe, feel and how, what, when, and why we learn." (p. 34)

I think that Mezirow (1991) would agree a broader meaning perspective is akin to a higher order of consciousness. He defines a 10-step process through which he believes meaning perspectives are transformed:

1. a disorienting dilemma;
2. self-examination with feelings of guilt or shame;
3. a critical assessment of epistemic, sociocultural, or psychic assumptions;
4. recognition that one's discontent and the process of transformation are shared and that others have negotiated a similar change;
5. exploration of options for new roles, relationships, and actions;
6. planning a course of action;
7. acquisition of knowledge and skills for implementing one's plans;
8. provisional trying of new roles;
9. building of competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships; and,
10. a reintegration into one's life on the basis of conditions dictated by one's new perspective. (pp. 168-169)



The leaders described in this inquiry have all gone through a number of these steps. Early childhood experiences and multi-cultural experiences have been rich sources of disorienting dilemmas for each of them. Many have described feelings of guilt or shame to me. They have moved through many of these stages – not in a linear fashion, but most have been present in their lives.

Mezirow's description of these phases provides almost a check-list for experiences which may foster shift in consciousness. Like my co-researchers, I've gone through a number of the events on this check-list in my life as well. As I look back, most of these events seem essential parts of my capacity to be self-reflective.

Robert Kegan (1994) develops a model of consciousness with five orders. I believe the leaders in this inquiry function consistently at what Kegan defines as a fourth order of consciousness where people are able:

1. To invent our own work
2. To be self-initiating, self-correcting and self-evaluating.
3. To be guided by our own visions at work.
4. To take responsibility for what happens to us at work externally and internally.
5. To be accomplished masters of our particular work roles, jobs or careers.

6. To conceive of the organization from the “outside in.” (pp. 152-153)

Kegan (1994) goes beyond this fourth level of consciousness to describe a fifth level, which is basically a deeply grounded, spiritual awareness of the oneness of life, living and the infinite. At this fifth level, people are better able to hold paradox and contradictions. They operate beyond ideology and look at the relationships between systems, including the systems in which they, themselves are participants. One way to speak of this is to say that they see themselves seeing. (pp. 314-315)

These young leaders rise from time to time to this fifth level of consciousness, and then slip back down as they deal with the challenges and vagaries of life around them.

Their capacity to work at a grassroots level and then connect globally may be an important manifestation of the capacity to operate at a fifth level of consciousness. It is the capacity to be intensely involved in the moment, in the work immediately before oneself, and simultaneously stand outside it and hold it in a global context.

Morris Berman (2000) says engaging in this sort of higher consciousness space requires us to get out of our heads, into our bodies and on with living spiritual lives. He offers a very

thoughtful analysis of how we spend too much time thinking, and too little time engaged with the uncertainty of direct experience.

Berman takes us back to nomadic times when there were no intermediaries. People lived and they died. They followed the patterns of the earth. Their lives were a direct experience of the mundane, the subtle and the sacred. Organizational hierarchies within living units were practically non-existent. People did what they needed to do. And, when there was a time of crisis where a different mobilization was necessary, a hierarchy was established and then abandoned when the crisis passed.

Agriculture shifted this. With agriculture came the capacity to generate surpluses. With surpluses came the need for storage. And with storage came the need for someone to be in charge of the community and the storage. Storage was an attempt to give a certain measure of control over the vagaries of climate and life. It was part of a progressive move from expecting and living with uncertainty in life to expecting and trying to achieve increased certainty.

Berman (2000) suggests that as storage became possible an accompanying need arose to have someone in charge of the storage and some means to establish the authority of that person over others. He believes that the worship of the “goddess mother” or

the Judeo-Christian God or any other deity came largely as a way to proclaim the existence of a god-head that had earthly counterparts in those people who held sacred or secular authority.

In other words, our successes as economic beings generating surplus crops pushed us away from direct experience of the divine. Intermediaries became necessary both for controlling governance and mediating spirituality.

Berman (2000) acknowledges that we are not going back to being nomads. He also says that we are so deeply enmeshed in our current ways of thinking that we are not going to think our way out. In particular, we're not going to get there with a "new paradigm." He claims the shift from an emphasis on mechanistic science to some sort of new embrace of a planetary culture is simply replacing one cultish, zealous and dogmatic way of knowing the world with another. (p. 120-122)

What Berman's (2000) comments bring home to me is that the work these young leaders are doing is not about constructing a new way of thinking. It is, rather, about constructing a new way of living and being and a new way of knowing which seems to be grounded in a higher order of consciousness.

Berman (2000) writes that

what we need is not a dramatic transformation of reality and culture, but simply the willingness to live in this culture and reality as we work on the intelligent repair of present problems, without hype or bombast, and let the future take care of itself. (p. 229)

Berman (2000) emphatically denies that this sort of shift requires any change in consciousness – he sees such talk as simply more of the new paradigm hyperbole. But I think he is in danger of throwing the baby out with the bathwater in his zeal to condemn the popular thinking about shifts in paradigms. I can see no way that one could live in this culture in the manner he describes without a shift to a higher order of consciousness akin to Kegan's (1994) fifth order. This sort of concentrating on immediate needs, but holding them with an openness to whatever may emerge is a dramatic shift from when Wheatley (1992) says that for three centuries we

have been planning, predicting, and analyzing the world. We have held on to an intense belief in cause and effect. We've raised planning to the highest of priestcrafts and imbued numbers with absolute power. We look to numbers to describe our economic health, our productivity, our physical well-being. (p. 28)

Wheatley (1992) admonishes us to begin noticing – really noticing – what is going on around us, not simply what our minds tell us to notice. Mezirow (1991) says that we shift to a broader

meaning perspective when our ways of thinking about the world are so shaken that we are invited to find a broader framework. Reason (1994) calls us to an awareness of concrete experience. Kegan (1994) invites us to consider that leadership can be offered from different levels of consciousness. Berman (2000) challenges us to step up to the plate and play a new game – to live in the world in a new way that shares many of the same characteristics of Kegan’s fifth order of consciousness. All of these authors ask us to relax into a deeper appreciation, and a looser holding of that which is “real.”

The seven people I have included in this inquiry are working, as Berman (2000) suggests, on the intelligent repair of present problems. Their work is close to the ground, without much hype. It is not work done in opposition to others; it is work to create new pathways which are transformative. I’ve experienced their work as grounded in a higher order of consciousness which beckons them, and the rest of us, into a new way of being in the world.

The concept of orders of consciousness helps to explain how these young leaders are different. Mezirow (1991) helps in establishing some of the conditions that can lead to the evolution of a higher order of consciousness. Kegan (1994) is able to offer descriptions of what it looks like to operate from a higher order of

consciousness. Reason's (1994) description of future participation provides an accurate picture of how these young leaders carry themselves. Berman (2000) makes it clear that this is not simply a way of thinking, but a way of being and this is also consistent with the way these young leaders are living their lives.

A question which arises, of course, is how can higher orders of personal consciousness be cultivated – in self and in others? I suspect that cultivation of this high level of consciousness is a new form of leadership.

### New Leadership

If it is true that the leaders I have included in this thesis are being called to a higher order of consciousness, how do they carry out their work as leaders? Harlan Cleveland, a long time commentator on leadership begins an inquiry into the current forms of leadership with a description of an era many remember, either from direct experience or from stories we have heard

there was a time, celebrated in song and story, when leadership was entrusted to people called leaders. Their numbers were tiny, their information scarce, their expertise primitive, the range of their options narrow, the reach of their power marginal, the scale of their actions limited. But they were at least presumed to be in charge. (Cleveland, 2002, p. 3)

Has the time of this heroic leader passed? Certainly my co-researchers would say that it has. But what it has passed to is far from being simple or clear. The pioneers described in this thesis dwell in two worlds – the one they are helping to birth, and the one that surrounds them.

I recall conversations with Marianne when she has described her experiences in supervising workers she was paying to build the living quarters of Kufunda. It wasn't much fun; she had to tell them what to do; she had to supervise them; she sometimes had to fire them. I've been in meetings with Ante when he has had to find his way to insisting that staff members at Horizon step up to the plate and take more responsibility for meeting financial goals – or suffer the consequences. I have watch Tim as he has worked to empower a group of Engage youth volunteers to plan and organize a global youth gathering. Each time I have seen them in a dance between the qualities of leadership they aspire towards in their stories and the realities of making something work now.

One way of thinking about this dance is by asking how does a leader, who is able to dwell from time to time in the space of a fifth order of consciousness, lead and/or manage a group of people – whether they are “staff” in the conventional sense, or “learners” in a program – who are typically operating at lower



orders of consciousness? Work of various theorists offer insights to this question.

Many authors contend that one critical aspect of leadership is creating conditions for connection and relationship within a system. Max DePree, Chairman of the Board of Herman Miller, a furniture manufacturing company which has practiced innovative leadership for 60 years, suggests that there are eight basic tenets of right relationship between leaders and followers:

- The right to be needed.
- The right to be involved.
- The right to a covenantal relationship.
- The right to understand.
- The right to affect one's one destiny.
- The right to be accountable.
- The right to appeal.
- The right to make a commitment.

(DePree, 1989, pp. 36-43)

Meg Wheatley lists a set of key practices that help people stay in right relationship while engaging in meaningful work:

- Nourish a clear organizational identity.
- Focus people on the bigger picture.
- Demand honest, forthright communication.
- Prepare for the unknown.
- Keep meaning at the forefront.
- Use rituals and symbols.
- Pay attention to individuals.

(Wheatley, 2003, pp. 4-6)

Cleveland suggests that leaders need certain sensibilities to cultivate these kinds of practices and right relationships. Leaders must

emphasize the equality of the group's membership;  
expend a lot of physical energy;  
encourage individual and group reflection;  
work softly, from invitation rather than coercion;  
develop consensus in the group;  
maintain a level of optimism not rationally warranted;  
enjoy complexity and constant change;  
find credit for their work inside themselves; and,  
continuously learn.  
(Cleveland, 2002, pp. 153-173)

I suspect that cultivating the framework of relationships, practices and sensibilities suggested by the above authors, while simultaneously getting “real work” done requires leaders who can operate from Kegan’s fifth order of consciousness. This framework is perhaps most important in terms of being able to set organization purpose and mission, especially if it is to be set by attuning to the future as Scharmer suggests. But it seems unlikely that a leader can operate from this fifth order of consciousness to set overall direction and then drop down to a lower level of consciousness to get work done NOW.

This is tricky territory. Cleveland uses the term “uncentralized leadership” in ways that seem similar to Berkana’s

use of life-affirming leadership and Rost's (1993) frame of twenty-first century leadership. Cleveland writes that uncentralized leadership requires a common understanding and eventual embodiment of a common set of rules or protocols. Until a group truly embodies the rules, some external authority is required to enforce them; after a group has embodied them, some procedures and other reminders will help keep them in place. (Cleveland, 2002, pp. 28-29) In other words, some measure of external authority must perhaps be practiced, even when creating and holding a space which is consistent with work being done from a higher order of consciousness.

But where does one draw the line? Ron Heifetz, Director of the Center for Public Leadership at Harvard University, argues that one has to get "onto the balcony," above the action, to see what is going on. From that place, a leader has to think politically, to sometimes orchestrate conflict, to ensure people are doing their own "work," and to hold a steady course. (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002, p. 6) In other words, he portrays a leader as someone who stands outside the system and manipulates it. He believes that the primary functions of leadership are to bring important things forward from the past, place emphasis on strategies and tactics, create adaptations rather than transformations, and assess

people's capacities to make painful adjustments, painful adaptations, and painful change. (Heifetz & Scharmer, 1999, pp. 6-7) Such views would be, I believe, as uncomfortable for my co-researchers as they are for me. They seem to go beyond the need for the amount of external authority Cleveland describes as necessary for creating a system which operates with decentralized leadership. They feel more akin to a mechanistic view of leadership in which external control – not just external authority – is required.

In some ways I think Heifetz is speaking more of management than he is of leadership. Even so, I suspect that leaders who manage from this place of external control may have difficulty in leading from a higher order of consciousness.

DePree (1989) offers the concept of “giants” among leaders.

Giants:

see opportunity where others see trouble;  
give others the gift of space;  
catch fastballs;  
have special gifts; and,  
enable others to express their own gifts.  
(pp. 73-79)

These characteristics certainly describe the leaders depicted in this thesis.

Adam Kahane, founder of Genron Consulting, could be speaking of these leaders as well when he says that people committed to changing the world have two qualities.

On the one hand, they are extraordinarily committed, body and soul, to the change they want to see in the world, to a goal greater than themselves. On the other hand, they are extraordinarily open to listening to what is happening in the world. (Kahane, 2001, p. 23)

Kahane (2001) goes on to say that our capacities to change the world depend on our levels of personal development, our sense of our own vocation and commitment to it, the range of our own seeing and sensing, our reflectiveness and our capacity to see and change ourselves. (p. 25)

The question that arises for me is if these leaders are leading in a new way, a way which is, perhaps, indicative of a higher order of consciousness, what is needed to sustain them in their leadership and what is required for the local actions they are inspiring to emerge into some sort of global force?

### New Social Movements

These leaders seem to be establishing the conditions for a new form of social movement which has a different texture, flavor, feel and orientation than the social movements of the last century. In no way do I mean to invalidate those earlier social movements,

or the work of a similar nature that is being carried out today. I do believe, however, that something new is emerging. And one purpose of this inquiry is to attempt to give language to this new kind of movement.

The young leaders I have been working with around the world see things through some new lenses. Their lenses are like Wolfgang Sachs (1992); I could see Marianne's eyes sparkling when she shared her thoughts in a journal in August 2003, after reading his book. Her exact words are important because they give the scent of this new social movement.

I am seeing my star a little clearer this morning. I am remembering how I was inspired by Grundtvig and his folke high school movement that transformed the Danish social landscape, creating the co-operative movement and a new breed of farmers – and with it growing success and wealth to a sector of society previously poor and downtrodden. I am remembering how in fact the vision is of a social landscape similarly transformed. Here. Healthy vibrant communities a la Gandhi's own vision for self-reliant villages that would be a microcosm of India.

I am remembering my excitement during the programmes at how rich our time together can be despite (or perhaps because) we have no real material wealth, but we have incredible social wealth together during these programmes, especially during the last programme for community organisers, the Call to Arts, and I imagine these pockets of wealth lived out not to occur only at Kufunda, but in the villages, in the communities, where they begin to live and work together from a different place, a different consciousness.

I imagine a few strong communities in which they build on, and expand, the win-win generated as people begin to work together, as they begin to circle with each other around community issues (much as I think it has already been done at Chikukwa in the eastern highlands), as they begin to grow their field of energy, love, collaboration and actually reverse the migratory patterns as projects are initiated, and work undertaken that attracts the youth to stay and work and live and learn at home. Like it is happening on Samsøe, Denmark.

But Mhondoro<sup>8</sup> is not Samsøe, you might say? Surely not, but does that mean that it is impossible to create of Mhondoro an attractive centre of life and possibility? First we need to change that assumption. First we need to realise that it is not such a mad outrageous proposition that Mhondoro could be an attractive and creative place for young people to stay and build their future. Lots of work might be needed to make that a reality, but let us start with the proposition that it is possible. In fact it should seem outrageous that it would not be so.

I remember that we are not simply a village, or learning centre, disconnected from the other villages and other communities, and I am excited by where we might go and what we might do as we keep our star in sight.

I quote this passage here because it helps me remember who these young leaders are and why I love and support them. A new social movement is arising which stretches beyond the concepts I've grown up with of economics, poverty, planning, production, science, needs, one world, participation, resources and all the rest.

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<sup>8</sup> Mhondoro is the Zimbabwean village where Marianne's grandmother lives.

This movement sees these concepts as badly skewed and destructive of life on this planet. It is people like Marianne and others who are less entrenched in these concepts who will provide the leadership to get us all moving in a more sane direction.

Neither I nor the leaders of these centres are very comfortable with calling this a movement. It is language we sometimes use, but with a need to say quickly that whatever is happening here is different than the social movements of the last century. Subcommandate Marcos of the Zapatista movement expresses a similar discomfort when responding to questions about whether or not the Zapatista movement is a vanguard. He says that

every vanguard assumes it is the representative of the majority. In our case, we think that this is not only a falsity but also, even in the best of cases, it doesn't go beyond good intentions and, in the worst of cases, it is a clear example of cooptation...To think that we can do this – to speak for others beyond ourselves – is political masturbation. We are coming to present our demands and hopefully start a chain reaction to which people could present others. (Marcos, 2002, p. 182)

If these centres are not part of a vanguard, in this old sense, how is it possible that they can be part of a new social movement? How does one get from local to global?



Erwin Laszlo (2001) sees

numerous grassroots movements and communities opting out of the mainstream and reforming themselves. These groups are barely visible, since for the most part their members go about their business without trying to convert others or call attention to themselves. They underestimate their own numbers and lack social organization and political cohesion. (p. 121)

He speaks of them as following spiritual paths and embarking on a wide range of civic projects and programs. His description fits the leaders and centres almost perfectly.

Bill Moyer and his colleagues (Moyer, Macalister, Finley, & Soifer, 2001) and Doug McAdam and his (McAdam, McCarthy, & Zald, 1996) have helped to give me a framework for distinguishing the movement of which these centres are part from movements of the past. Moyer et al. provide a compelling, experience-based analysis of social movements, particularly those of the last century in the United States and Europe. Based on my own awareness as a participant in some of these movements, I would say he does an excellent job of describing the movements and providing a theoretical and strategic framework which can make the work of these movements more effective.

In the context of this dissertation, however, I want to focus on how the work and “energy” of the learning leadership centres

diverge from that of the social movements Moyer et al. describe.

They offer three different definitions of social movements (p. 2):

1. Something designed to “promote or resist change through collective action.”
2. A “preference structure for social change consisting of a set of opinions, attitudes and beliefs” within a loosely affiliated group without any overarching organizational structure.
3. “Collective actions in which the populace is alerted, educated, and mobilized, sometimes over years and decades, to challenge powerholders and the whole society to redress social problems or grievances and restore critical social values.”

Their work has been based on this last definition, which they call "Movement Action Plan (MAP)." Making MAP explicit is important because

one of the chief limitations of social movements has been the lack of strategic models and methods that help activists plan, conduct, and evaluate their social movement. The absence of a practical model that describes the normal path of successful social movements disempowers activists and limits the effectiveness of their movements. Without a guiding framework that explains the step-by-step processes of social movement success, many activists are unable to set appropriate long- and short-term goals, confidently develop the most effective strategies, tactics and programs; and avoid common movement pitfalls. (Moyer et al., 2001, p. 5)

Moyer et al. (2001) believe that movements are involved in a long-term struggle between the movement and those he calls the powerholders for the “heart, minds and support” (p. 16) of the general population. Those who are powerholders engage regularly in calculated deceptions which exploit social myths to maintain their own positions of power. What movements must do, according to Moyer et al., is alert, educate, inspire and involve the population in order to create literal movement towards social, ecological and economic justice.

I’m struck by the difference between this emphasis to alert, educate, inspire and involve and the four terms I have sometimes used to describe the work of Berkana and these centres which is to name, connect, nourish and illuminate. In the case of Moyer et al. (2001), the emphasis is on:

*alerting* people to something that is going on outside of them;  
*educating* them about what is really happening;  
*inspiring* them with a sense of new possibilities; and,  
*involving* them in creating new solutions.

The approach focuses on problems, opposition to what’s happening now, and changing the actions of someone else – the powerholders. By contrast, the work of Berkana has been to:

*notice* and *name* some common energies, orientations and sensibilities that are emerging within a number of people; *connect* them with each other so they can begin to explore the nature of that energy; *nourish* them with knowledge and other resources to deepen the exploration; *illuminate* them and the work they subsequently do so others can find their way towards the same field.

The work of Berkana – and of the centres described in this thesis – focuses on possibilities and changing the self as the starting point. It works on principles of attraction rather than opposition: leaders are invited to work from a sense of what they what to see emerge rather than from a sense of what they want to oppose.

The terminology from Moyer et al. (2001) – *alert, educate, inspire* and *involve* – and Berkana’s – *name, connect, nourish* and *illuminate* – feel as if they carry different fields of meaning around them. The terminology from Moyer et al. fit within a field where outcomes are foreseen, predicted and worked towards. They fit into a causal universe. Berkana’s fit into a field that is emergent, based on aspirations and relationships.

In his conclusions, Moyer et al. (2001) list what they call five strategic guidelines for social activism in the 21st century. The fifth is “include personal and cultural transformation as a central strategy for creating a peaceful world – starting with activists ourselves and our organizations.” (p. 197) The work of Berkana and these centres stands squarely within this fifth strategy. Moyer et al. do not discuss this fifth strategy anywhere else in the book. It does not stand in opposition to his other four strategies of alerting, education, inspiring and involving. Rather, it is a new dimension which requires, perhaps, a higher order of consciousness.

When Moyer et al. (2001) discuss four activist roles – citizen, rebel, reformer and change agent. (p. 21) They ask that activists quit squabbling amongst themselves about which role is most important and recognize that all effective activists must not only respect all four, but have the skills and capacities associated in those roles as part of their repertoire. He reminds me of the challenge that Joanna Macy and Molly Brown (1998) offer when they acknowledge three essential actions needed in the world. They speak of (a) the work to keep things from getting worse – protest and opposition; (b) the work to make things better in the existing economy – social change; and (c) the work of transformation. I wonder, how the categories of Macy and Brown

and Moyer et al. might relate to Kegan's (1994) orders of consciousness?

Here is one possibility.

Table 1

<b>Kegan</b>	<b>Macy and Brown</b>	<b>Moyer et al.</b>
Third Order of Consciousness	protest	citizen, rebel
Fourth Order of Consciousness	social change	reformer, change agent
Fifth Order of Consciousness	transformation	

Kegan's third order of consciousness seems to line up with Macy and Brown's protest work and Moyer et al.'s classification of citizen/rebels. Kegan's fourth order of consciousness seems present with Macy and Brown's work on social change and Moyer et al.'s work on reformers and change agents. Kegan's fifth order of consciousness seems to correspond to Macy and Brown's work for transformation. I believe it is transformation, and this fifth order of consciousness, to which these centres and their leaders aspire.

Moyer et al. (2001) suggest that social movements arise when three factors are present: political opportunities, mobilizing structures and framing processes. (p. 105) I would contrast these

three with three factors I find present with these centres: personal calling; capacities for connection; and, inquiry and reflection leading to knowledge emergence. I intend, in no way, to dispute the accuracy of Moyer et al.'s description, but once again to paint a different picture, to depict a different emphasis in these centres which aligns itself with Kegan's fifth order of consciousness.

Bill Moyer has now passed on. And I am sorry never to have had the opportunity to meet him. He is clearly one of those who has gone before me and tried to understand, and share, how we might create those conditions of justice that are so important to many of us.

Doug McAdam and his colleagues (McAdam et al., 1996) provide a counterpart to Moyer's work. The authors believe the social movements of the last century can be "described in terms of the careers, beliefs, and ideologies and critical events surrounding movement leaders" (p. 263) and that these movements "focused largely on structure and process." (p. 263) To a large extent the authors define social movements as protest movements designed to create political change.

One of the main things I noticed was how the orientation of these movements was *tactical*, *strategic* and *ideological*, drawing from an expression of an overall set of conditions with an emphasis

on convincing people, on changing the way people think and changing the way they behave politically. I would characterize the new orientation I see in the centres and the people included in this inquiry as being *enspirited*, *appreciative* and *emergent*. They are rooted in a local environment and draw from local experience. They invite people into their own personal experience so it will change the way they live. This shift from *tactical*, *strategic* and *ideological* to *enspirited*, *appreciative* and *emergent* is a key example, to me, of the shift of consciousness embodied in the work of these centres. They have moved on to a wider dimension, a broader meaning perspective.

One of the ways in which this shift shows up is in the immediate objectives of different activities. The movements of the 20<sup>th</sup> century were constructed, to a large extent, to raise the concern and awareness of the general public so that they would urge elected officials to make major policy changes.

One example of this, which I found very surprising, was the description of some of Martin Luther King's work by McAdam et al. (1996) The authors claim, backed up by some of King's own writings, that he deliberately used nonviolence to evoke violent responses. The strategic reason for this was that the violent responses produced a shockwave of media attention, which then



raised awareness around civil rights issues. The book describes how the protest action in 1961 and 1962 in Albany, Georgia, was judged a failure because the police chief simply conducted mass-arrests without violent encounters with the protesters. As a result, there was minimal press coverage and according to the polls, minimal change in public opinion. In 1963 the protest in Birmingham, Alabama, occurred after a violent, racist sheriff was voted out of office and before his successor took over. King and his lieutenants wanted to provoke a violent response which would capture media attention – and they were very successful.

I found this surprising simply because I was unable to imagine King using non-violence as a tactic to produce a violent response. But his strategic objective was a change in public policy and he was successful!

The work of the centres and the people in this inquiry is based on concepts like “trust the process” and emergence. Their objectives are around personal change, rather than shifting public policy. The centres help people define and move on their own personal journey, rather than creating strategies and tactics to achieve a particular policy outcome.

Of course, huge questions exist about how people who change the way they live can alleviate the titanic ecological, social

and economic problems existing on the planet now. I am reminded, however, of something I first heard the late Willis Harmon, longtime President of the Institute of Noetic Science, say in a speech in Boise, Idaho in the late seventies, “The world changes when large numbers of people change the way they think a little bit.” These young leaders would say, I think, that the change is a personal one.

The kind of leadership, and the kind of organization needed for this new form of movement is, perhaps, different than that of the past. McAdam, McCarthy et al. paint a picture of past movements as dominated by movement leaders. One of their primary jobs was to capture media attention. The movements had command and control structures – at least at the national level.

These 20<sup>th</sup>-century movements, according to Anne Doshier,

started with agitation in a population, were inspired and led by a charismatic visionary, moved through transformation, were linked by vision into action, and usually bifurcated into: (a) routinization of policy/design, regulation, and technique (a state of comparative order), or (b) dissipation (a state of chaos). (Anne Doshier, personal communication, October 14, 2003)

It is still too early to tell what the course of a movement that emerges from these centres may be. If their leaders hope for more than routinization or dissipation, careful attention will likely be

required. In an article on “Intentional Evolutionary Design” of organizations (Doshier & Terry, 2002), the authors suggest that organizations embracing the “new story” are intentional, participatory and evolutionary. They further suggest that the approach these organizations employ is appreciative, applicable, proactive, and collaborative. According to Doshier and Terry these organizations must engage in “homeorhetic learning” which “means learning from within flow while simultaneously learning how to direct the flow.” (Doshier & Terry, 2002)

If these leaders and their centres are the seeds of a new form of social movement which is enspirited, appreciative and emergent, one critical, deep challenge they face is doing a number of things simultaneously:

1. their work;
2. learning from within the flow of their work;
3. creating their centres – the form of their work;
4. learning from inside this process of creation;
5. standing outside both the learning of the work and of the centre creation in order to see it as a whole new form and flow to be directed as well.

This seems to be the work of a higher-order of consciousness. Something has shifted.

In November 2003 one of the police leaders at the Miami world trade demonstrations said that the protestors “had no leaders, and there was no way to predict what they were going to do.” When asked how the police could be trained to work in such a situation, he said, “You know, I think we have to learn how to be in conversation with the protestors. After all, they are intelligent, thoughtful people. We have to start talking with them.”<sup>9</sup> These protestors are likely “cousins” of my co-researchers. While engaged in protest, they are still operating in some new ways which include the emergence of leaders as needed.

The police leader is a likely cousin as well. While enforcing the law, he sees there is a need for new terms of engagement, new ways of working with those who see things differently.

There is a new story emerging not only from these centres but from other spaces and places where people are beginning to gather in new ways. A new story is emerging where people are learning to think and feel and be beyond roles and positions which might otherwise trap them. A new story is emerging as people learn to see each other more fully.

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<sup>9</sup> Captured from memory of a television news interview on MSNBC morning news program.

### What Is Visible From these Six Windows?

Joseph Tainter (1988) argues convincingly that when societies have reached a certain level of complexity, they collapse under the weight of their own complexity. The core of his argument is that societies inherently increase in complexity and at some point reach a point where the high incremental costs for increased in complexity, greatly outweigh any benefit (p. 199). I believe that post-industrial society is at such a point. The high costs – social, ecological and economic – appear to me to greatly outweigh the benefits to either the earth, or the majority of human population.

The question that has concerned me for years is whether or not this collapse, which I believe we are in the midst of, can be lived through without massive destruction. One of Theobald's points for many years was that this was the first time in human history that a dominant society had the capacity through weaponry and now through manipulation of economies to wreak widespread damage beyond its borders. Must the disintegration of this society and this age be accompanied by massive destruction?

It seems a new possibility is growing.

If we can learn to concentrate, and give utmost priority to what needs to happen locally – in all local places. If we can uncover and support the ways in which these local changes need to interconnect. If we can trust the power of emergence and follow the patterns as they emerge. If we can begin to live in ways which open the possibility of more and more people developing a higher order of consciousness. If we can nurture and support the deep capacity for leadership many people have. If we can weave this work together as a new, locally-grounded, global social movement.

If. If. If.

So many ifs, and so many possibilities. The stories of the young leaders presented in this thesis begin to illustrate these possibilities. They live and lead in ways which implicitly embrace the ideas and concepts synthesized in this literature review. By beginning to make these concepts more explicit, these leaders and others may be able to better understand, guide and deepen their own practice of leadership.

The literature reviewed in this thesis supports the existence of possibility. It both grounds and expresses a theoretical substantiation for the work of these young leaders. It grounds the faith I have that we, the human species on this planet, may come through these times and into more balanced lives.

## CHAPTER FIVE – SEARCH FOR THE META-STORY

This inquiry is more than wonderful stories of these seven people. It is a meta-story of change being born in the world. Is there a new theory of how change happens? Perhaps. At the very least there is some guidance here, an affirmation, for others who would journey into the future with these seven pioneers.

Einstein once said that problems are not solved at the level of consciousness which created them.

When my mother was dying several years ago I realized that my thinking, conceptualizing mind -- that great tool and gift the universe had given me -- was insufficient to hold the full range of experience I, and she, were having as she died. To understand her dying, I needed to reach to another level.

My logical mind sees no way out of the predicaments we are in. It says that eco-system destabilization will lead to major social and economic hardships which will lead in turn to major population diebacks through famine, disease, war and other disasters.

My logical mind sees no way.

But I heard a story two summers ago. Like so much else in this dissertation, it was a global story with local roots. My friend Monica Nissen from Denmark and I were sitting on a hillside in

Slovenia. She had been reading a story about an American Prisoner of War (P.O.W.) in Vietnam<sup>10</sup>. When asked to what he attributed his eight years survival, he began his answer by saying that those who died first were those who had hope. They hoped they would be rescued. They hoped they would escape. They hoped it would happen soon. He survived, this P.O.W. said, because he had faith. He didn't know what would happen, but he knew he would be alright.

This story has a haunting quality for me. I have no hope that we, as a human species, will find our way through these times. My thinking, logical mind cannot imagine a way. And, yet, I have faith. I believe we will. I believe there are higher powers at work here and that as a species we are being invited to enlarge the way we understand the universe through a different way of being in this universe.

This is, I think, the meta-story here.

These pioneers, these young leaders, are operating from a deep faith. This faith springs from their willingness and their ability to embrace a spirit-filled path. When I say "spirit-filled path," I mean they are on a journey which knows neither inner nor

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<sup>10</sup> I learned later the story was told by Jim Collins (2001)



outer limits, a journey that is dissolving the boundaries between themselves and that which surrounds them. The particulars of the journey, as well as the vehicles used for the journey, differ from person to person, but they are each on a quest to discover their wholeness.

On this spirit-filled path they are developing a great openness to ambiguity and uncertainty. Recall the P.O.W.'s words. This is not about hope, it is about faith. And when we operate from a place of faith, we are able to confront the ambiguity and uncertainty of the universe without being overwhelmed by fear. It is our fear that causes us to rush about to resolve ambiguities and uncertainties rather than simply accepting them as the essential building blocks of creation.

The presence of others whom they trust and love and with whom they are deeply connected is essential. As Marianne said to me in an e-mail in early 2004, "my own fears seem so much smaller when shared and spoken out." They speak out loud to those they know offer them unconditional love and support. This work cannot be done alone. It would be too crazy-making.

They are being invited into a higher level of consciousness where they are able to notice and pay attention at deeper levels

than ever before. A paradox, perhaps: in order to go deeper, we must go higher.

Each has lived in ways in which the disorienting dilemmas of multi-cultural experience or other equally profound disturbances in life have been invitation and pathway to step into their higher selves. They have been developing a capacity to be deeply and passionately engaged, while letting go of outcomes. They have been developing a capacity to reach beyond themselves in many different ways.

This higher level of consciousness is not some grand and glorious state where all things are clear and resolved. It is simply another way of seeing how to live life. It does not patronize nor offer condescending analysis about the work being doing at so-called lower levels of consciousness. In fact even this notion of lower levels of consciousness begins to transform, itself, because it is a construct created at a lower level of consciousness. This higher level of consciousness recognizes that we each must find and follow our calling. There is so much work that needs to be done in these times. We each must find our own. No work is less courageous, or more. The story is about each person finding the courage to step into that which calls them more deeply into life and into relationships.

One aspect of this higher level of consciousness is continuous, transformative learning. For example, the assumptions these leaders currently hold are important themselves, but what is more important is that these leaders individually and collectively know that it is essential they continuously surface and clarify their assumptions with each other.

This work follows the path of emergence. Sometimes the path of emergence calls for being strategic and tactical. Sometimes it calls for simply taking the next step. Both are acknowledged and honored.

Perhaps the work of these leaders will evolve into a new movement – and perhaps it already has. It will be a movement which is inherently participatory in which the entire system is constructed from within and where structures and hierarchies emerge and dissolve to match the needs and requirements of particular tasks and periods of time. We now have conceptual constructs and technological tools which make this possible. When held and used from a higher level of consciousness, a new form of movement emerges.

I frequently receive e-mails or phone calls from others around the world who have heard of these centres. They have

heard that something different is happening here and they feel a calling to stand in the same field.

This story is just beginning.

## CHAPTER SIX – EPILOGUE

On a Thursday afternoon, in early January 2004, I was about to leave my office to travel to the Bay Area for my consultation meeting with my dissertation committee. The week before I had begun sharing my semi-final thesis with my co-researchers and other colleagues. A response arrived from Tim

Yes, it is my story, it is our story, it makes me sing and cry to read it. I like the emerging meta themes, rings true. The hopelessness, yes, being, freeing, releasing into deeper work. Thank you for writing this, gathering this, harvesting our experience into a sense of an emergent future. It is good to be seen and named. What could I possibly add? Bob, you rock, you are a rock for me and in a world where the boat is rocking, it is good to know you. (Tim, personal communication, January 15, 2004)

Of course, it brought tears to my eyes.

I sent my semi-final draft to perhaps 40 people. More than 20 responded with comments and questions and wonderings. All except one expressed deep resonance with the story they heard being told here. As I read all their words, and read them again, three things are clear to me:

First, there is a story being told here that is important to share. A flame of possibility is offered in the stories of these young leaders and it needs to be nurtured to provide greater illumination.

The dissertation will become the basis for one or more books as well as magazine articles.

Second, the inquiry presented in this thesis has only just begun. Many questions need to be raised and pondered if I and others are to be able to more fully understand this possibility of enspirited leadership as core to a new social movement.

Third, what many of us are doing is new. Those of us committed to these enterprises must redouble our efforts to co-learn and co-understand our way into this new territory. Berkana, Pioneers of Change, these learning centres, many other enterprises coming into form are all traveling in new territory and have very precarious existences.

In this Epilogue I want to share questions my reviewers raised with me and questions that came to mind as I reflected on their comments. They are in no particular order. They are a seed for the continuing inquiry.

1. Does this work at the local level, in fact, have any chance at all of having a global impact? Or is it simply people fleeing from that which is larger than themselves and their capacity to think and act in large enough systemic terms?
2. Throughout the thesis, the emphasis is on young leaders. Is youth a pre-condition for the *enspirited* leadership? What

roles do different generations play in the evolution of *enspirited* leadership?

3. These times seem truly crazy. How can we hold each other better as we continually learn to come from spirit as we grow ourselves, and each other, through right relationships as we commit to the work of healing and transforming the world?
4. What are the characteristics, challenges, opportunities of this new social movement? So many social movements serve as a platform for political change; are there political motivations attached to this social movement?
5. What is needed to plant seeds in other places to grow this social movement? What kind of support is needed for such leadership to be nurtured?
6. What has been the impact of the centres these leaders have created? How much are the thoughts, values and drive behind these young leaders reflected in the consciousness of their colleagues, associates and program participants? What have been the changes in people's lives that have resulted from their work?
7. The intentions of these leaders are very inspirational. But will participants in the centres become highly motivated only

to be crushed by the reality of the rest of the world once they complete their involvement with the centres?

8. Are an expanded awareness of the whole, and a deepening into one's own spirituality, simply two sides of one thing?
9. Is this higher order of consciousness accessible to all? Can it be cultivated? If this work can't be done alone, how do groups of people cultivate higher consciousness? To what extent is this an individual path, and to what extent a collective one?
10. How does someone with a higher order of consciousness relate successfully to those with lower orders of consciousness, without becoming consumed by ego and a sense of superiority?
11. Not all people, after having had the experiences described here, evolve a higher level of consciousness. Some just become mean, judgmental and cynical. What creates the difference?
12. We have become so busy. There is always so much to do. How do we work with the urgency these times present, and at the same time slow down? Synchronicities that might provide guidance are around us all the time and we are too busy to see. How do we slow our pace?



13. The leaders described here are members of a global tribe. They are visible and vocal and they show the uneasiness that the whole world has about the present paradigm. Why do they take on this risky job – showing, exposing themselves? Why are they stepping out of the herd? Why might others?
14. While the people who are described here are extraordinary, many people have the same building blocks in their lives. Why is it that some become ordinary, and others extraordinary?
15. What different conceptual constructs might best help to explore that which is emerging here? What about Spiral Dynamics, Spiritual Inquiry, Human Dynamics, Integral Psychology and others?
16. What is this dance between faith and hope? What does it mean to stand with no particular sense of hope, but to still have faith? Is this, in some way, the core of the spirit of *enspirited* leadership?
17. Are the patterns described here happening elsewhere as well? If they are it could mean an exponential growth at some point – or maybe to describe it more accurately – we may be approaching a point comparable to the moment

when the water in a lake suddenly becomes ice. Then,  
there's not only faith but also hope!

So many questions, and these only the tip of the iceberg of further inquiry. Something is alive here. I can smell it on the wind. After reading a draft of my thesis, one reviewer, a Berkana Board member, said

These young people that you have been telling about have a level of expectation that is unusual, unexpected, irrational and naïve. They could easily fail as some have/will. But some will succeed because they see something we mortals don't see, and they are smart enough to put together methods for going there that the rest of us would not try. They have a level of push (faith) that others of us dare not even to hope for.

Another Berkana Board member commented

These life experiences are, in essence, an act of inventing a new form of being and doing in the world. It is the creation of a new paradigm not as an abstract conceptual idea but as a practical, day-by-day form of acting and being present. This new paradigm is emerging out of the interaction, conversations, actions and stories emanating from the wonderful work of this group of individuals.

I think they both got it right. It is of course, naïve to create a new way of being and doing in the world. Those who do so will seem to themselves and to others to fail from time to time. In the short term, and through the lens of the old paradigm, success may seem hard to achieve. But through their interactions,

conversations, actions and stories, because of their faith, there is the possibility of surprise.

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## APPENDIX – CENTRE DESCRIPTIONS

Six amazing centres have been formed by these leaders. I use the term “centres” advisedly. For Manish, Shikshantar is not a centre, it is a living space, it is a *jivan andolan* (life movement), and it is part of a much larger web. Engage is wherever the work takes Tim in the world. But overall the word centre seems to best describe these amazing enterprises.

In the fall of 2002, a Berkana Institute Intern worked with my guidance to develop the following short descriptions of these six centres.

### Horizon

#### Origination

Ante Glavas and Damir Cicak formulated the idea for Horizon in the mid-1990s. Both had been members of AIESEC, where they’d discovered how it feels to work with passion, and developed the belief that there’s more to life than the values promoted by the dominant commercial culture. In June 1999 they created Horizon, an educational institution, to invest in the development of human capital in the context of the rebuilding of post-war Croatia in transition from socialism. In a place where

generations have grown up with the assumption of being taken care of by the government, Horizon aspires to help people learn how to think and develop for themselves, and realize that they have choices in their lives.

## Programs

Horizon's work is based on systems thinking, employing a combination of Open Space technology, chaos theory, and autopoiesis to promote personal development learning at many levels beyond the purely intellectual, including the whole mind (conscious, sub-conscious, and un-conscious), emotional, body.

The organization pursues a variety of activities, including:

Pokret. Dedicated to youth empowerment, Pokret has been operating in high schools for 2 years, and is currently serving about 10,000 students. In these programs, youth define issues of concern, then develop and implement initiatives in response, with the support of Horizon mentors. The goal of Pokret is to develop motivated, proactive leaders, capable of seeing challenges as opportunities and empowered to act on them.

Youth self-organise around issues they care about and in some schools, these year-long programs take the form of extracurricular activities, in others they are incorporated into

the curriculum. Pokret is supported by the Ministry of Education of the Croatian government, as well as the embassy of the United States.

School for Personal and Organizational Development. Together with Facultas, a local organization specializing in human potential, Horizon offers this program to people who aspire to learn how to tap into their own potential, build better organizations, relate in community, and be truly happy in how they live in the world. This course combines learning from cybernetics, gestalt, neuro-linguistic programming, biodynamics, transactual analysis, psychotherapy, psychology, ancient Asian practice and meditation. The 16 month course takes place in several intervals and incorporates individual assignments and mentorship during interim periods. So far three generations (about 40 people) have completed the course, and 14 more are currently in progress. Most have been young adults ages 25-35.

Educational Programs. Offered are a wide range of personal development courses of varying lengths, from single session workshops to year-long programs. Some of the subjects offered include creativity, self-expression, Tai Chi, foreign languages,

meditation, anti-stress, and neuro-linguistic programming.

Also offered are 2 day courses public 2-3 times per month on a variety of topics related to systems thinking, personal and organizational development.

In-house education for organizations. This service blends education and consulting for companies. Programs often focus on team leadership and deeper communication, and involve both workshops and ongoing implementation assistance. Currently 100 organisations are served on a regular basis with our key clients being Siemens and Microsoft.

Learning Center – Eco-Village. Horizon envisions creating a wholly ecological village that will provide a space for people to get in touch with themselves and each other. The government of Croatia has offered land for the project at a very low price. Horizon currently seeks seed capital to purchase this land and pursue a feasibility study.

#### Participants

Horizon works primarily with two groups of people: people already in leadership positions that are open to learning about new ideas, and high school and college-age youth that represent future

leadership. Both of these groups have great potential to spread learning.

Horizon has provided educational services in 6 countries, to 34 organizations. Students are attracted by word of mouth, and generally cover their own costs of participation. Results so far are encouraging. For example, activities began in the region of Istria, which has since become the most progressive part of Croatia. Many leaders in that region have participated in Horizon programs, and most of them are in some way involved in societal change.

### Learning

Horizon describes two insights that have emerged so far from their experience. One is that people will never be satisfied with their learning until they begin to value the process of learning more than knowledge acquisition, and get comfortable with asking questions and not having the answers. The second is that the potential impact of change is incumbent upon its participants. In its in-house work with companies, Horizon has learned that it is not possible to implant systems of “non-control” until the people who comprise existing systems are receptive to such change.

## Development

Horizon has made a commitment to sustaining as much of its operations as possible with income derived thereof. The organization diversified from its original activities, leveraging its core principles and skills to work in ways that could generate income to help support the operation as a whole. Despite significant success with this strategy, Horizon describes self-sufficiency as an ongoing challenge.

Horizon leverages a broad network of partners that evolved around specific projects. Collaboration with these partners has been instrumental to many of the programs described above. At the same time, becoming Microsoft's official education partner gave Horizon access to 60 local partner companies, while ongoing services to large organizations like Siemens have been instrumental in developing Horizon's income generating capacity. In addition, the continued education over time with organizations like Siemens where they work with 100 of their managers on a one-year basis allows for true transformation of the individuals and therefore the whole organisation to take place. From building relationships school by school, to getting buy-in and support from

private and public entities in Croatia and beyond, partnership has played an important role in the scale of Horizon's development.

In addition to work in Croatia, Horizon is currently setting up operations in the Czech republic, and has contemplated expansion into Chile, South Africa, Egypt and West Africa.

## Synapse

### Origination

Cire Kane created the Synapse Learning Center in Dakar, Senegal to address the twin challenges of the future of its youth, and consequently the future of its society. The needs are palpable: in Senegal seven in ten children grow up below the poverty line, while youth under the age of 25 represent 58% of the population. Only one third of those who complete primary education can access secondary education, while only 20% of those finish secondary school can access higher education. Even those who attend a university find that the educational system has not prepared them with the skills required by the labor market.

In this context, Cire saw the unrealized potential embodied in vast numbers of young people who are unemployed, ignored, disillusioned and disenfranchised. Via conversations with peers, elders and friends, he concluded that young people are capable of



defining problems and acting on them. In so doing, youth can develop their own creativity and skills, and take greater responsibility in their communities. Based on this idea, Cire set out to shift the local mindset from one that accepts youth as passive recipients to one that expects young people to be able doers. He created Synapse to empower youth and their initiatives, developing programs that advance creative and entrepreneurial leadership for social change that can benefit community, personal realization and global concern. At present, this takes the form of education, youth employment, and community economic development in Senegal.

## Programs

Synapse's work has three primary components: empowering, incubating and networking. Current activities include:

Training services. The organization offers workshops on business and personal skills. Seminars and forums offer information on specific topics. Keynote speakers and Teen panel presentations offer forums to share experiences. A pool of consultants provides specific technical assistance.

Business Incubator. Synapse currently seeks seed funding for a business incubator, which will provide support to early stage ventures, including technical assistance and expert advice, office infrastructure and communications services, and help in obtaining financing. Synapse is also promoting an “adopt a business/entrepreneur” program as an alternative means of funding and support.

Capital access. Synapse is developing inroads to funding sources for its participants. In the meantime, the organization works with youth to develop their financial plans.

Networking. Synapse gives youth access to information sources, entrepreneurs, mentors, partners, funders, tools and collaboration. This occurs in local learning spaces; mentoring dinners with entrepreneurs; learning expeditions to local businesses; an annual marketplace of youth businesses; and leadership conferences. Synapse also connects members digitally to a broad network of people and organizations beyond Senegal, hosting a discussion forum, and promoting community among members.

Community action. Part of Synapse’s work focuses on activities to improve community circumstances. One such initiative is the Education against Exclusion program, which offers primary education to street children in hopes of their reintegration into schools and community. Another involves developing a set of Future Search Conferences on the topic of HIV/AIDS.

Vocational Counseling. Synapse engages with young people to help them move through work-related transitions. The focus is on “employability,” helping members to understand themselves, their motivations and what they have to offer as they seek work.

Facilitation. This involves working with participants to overcome barriers to effective dialogue and problem-solving, freeing the imagination to envision positive shared futures and co-creating concrete means of implementing those visions.

#### Resources

Synapse maintains a database of publications, papers, and other information and resources for members. These include descriptions of successful initiatives, programs and practices; case

studies of youth initiatives that provide insights on what has and hasn't worked; tools that have proven effective; and photos.

## Participants

Synapse works with 4 primary groups, including unemployed university graduates, employed graduates, undergraduates, and those who are illiterate, aged 18-35. Synapse develops programs tailored to the needs of each of these groups. Participants in the Education against Exclusion project average 7-14 years of age. So far 31 young people have accessed Synapse training; more than 400 youth along with people from the government, civil society and private sector have participated in workshops and networking events; 40 children are involved in the Education against Exclusion project; and seven projects have been selected for the incubator program.

## Learning

From its work, Synapse has learned that helping youth develop skills alone is not enough. Many youth need more concrete assistance in finding a job or funding to start a business. They need affirmation of their capabilities and ability to design a vision for their lives. Most importantly, they know their needs best, thus must participate in program design for success.

## Development

Synapse programs are currently offered at no cost, both to make them accessible to participants, and to introduce Synapse's capabilities to the market. In the future, however, Synapse intends to develop income-generating services. In the meantime, they work toward building relationships with local businesses and others potential resources. Thus far funding has been a tremendous source of challenge, resulting in program delays due to shortfalls.

Synapse has successfully developed relationships in many areas to support its work. Organizations such as the Global Fund for Children, the Friedrich Ebert Foundation and the Artemesia Foundation have funded specific projects and initiatives. Locally, a pool of consultants and business mentors has volunteered their time to support program delivery. Internationally the Berkana Institute, New Stories and others have offered pro bono support.

## Shikshantar

### Origination

Manish Jain created Shikshantar in late 1998 with the goal of catalyzing a movement to transform education and development in India, based upon the principles of *swaraj* or rule-over-the-self.

The organization has many facets, operating as an applied research institution, library, community activity center, retreat space, and publishing house.

Shikshantar seeks to challenge the existing 'culture of schooling,' characterized by competition, controls, fear, compulsion, homogenization and standardization. Shikshantar believes these elements disempower and dehumanize students, generating conformity, obedience and apathy. This breeds unthinking consumers, unlikely to question existing systems, and unaware of their potential to shape their own well-being and that of their communities. As such, change begins with 'unlearning' to deprogram preconditioned mindsets or assumptions, while encouraging people to reclaim control over their learning and development. This thinking is based upon ideas put forth by many thinkers over several decades, dating back to India's struggle for freedom. Vimukt Shiksha means liberating learning. Shikshantar has set out to liberate learning from the walls of schooling, and discover what kinds of learning spaces and opportunities do in fact help to liberate the potentials of people.

## Programs

Shikshantar develops projects that explore new approaches and methods; organizes workshops, seminars and conferences; promotes awareness and dialogue; advises organizations committed to change; develops itself as an open learning community, and publishes extensively to disseminate its learning. Activities take place in 15 neighborhoods, 10 schools, and 5 caste communities, in addition to a host of other religious, artistic, natural and linguistic spaces.

The city of Udaipur has become a laboratory for Shikshantar, via an initiative known as Udaipur as a Learning City. It started with a community in which residents saw education stifling children's potential, increasing economic dependence on surrounding villages, and a future with limited alternatives for improvement, yet left responsibility for such dilemmas in the hands of the Government or the Market. Shikshantar set out to create an organic learning community that would redefine the status quo in Udaipur, create new learning spaces and opportunities to empower individual and collective potential in taking responsibility for transforming the city's development. Shikshantar engaged people of all ages and

affiliations in conversations about the city's challenges and ideas about what could be done. These conversations resulted in a number of participatory initiatives.

Identifying and connecting learning sources. This included development of a skills resource directory with artists, artisans, organic farmers; a study of environmental groups; Mewari language and identity projects; and a study on the spiritual dimensions of Udaipur.

Self-organizing learning communities. Several communities emerged, including Platform for Youth, supporting youth to develop projects, creative activities, and life visions; Teachers Action Group; NGO Young People's Forum; and African Forum.

Community reflections and dialogue. These activities have taken many forms, including community media such as "People's Wall Paper;" youth street theater; video screenings; public discussions; surveys; and public exhibitions.

Unlearning/learning workshops and seminars. These have included workshops such as "Art and Creativity" to understand creative potential and strengthen confidence; Learning to live for the 21st century; Mind mapping, exercises in creative thinking,



problem solving, and brainstorming; and development of facilitation skills for youth.

Regenerating learning spaces: learning parks. These have begun with abandoned outdoor spaces that kids reclaimed and shaped, proving great environments for hands-on, experiential co-learning. Clean-up challenged classist ideas. Writing to local officials for permission taught initiative. Removal of rewards and punishments helped unlearn feelings of competition, inferiority-superiority and success-failure. Interest-based self-organized activities sparked creativity, responsibility and intrinsic motivation.

### Participants

Shikshantar's work engages people of all ages, including youth in school or out of school, working and non-working adults from around India and beyond. Generally programs for children ages 5-13 are based within their families and neighborhoods, while workshops activities for youth aged 15-21 are held at Shikshantar. The latter group often participates in activities with the younger group, learning from the interaction and the process of taking responsibility. An emphasis is placed on creating opportunities for intergenerational learning.

A core team of 8-12 learning activists in residence drives Shikshantar's work. They are co-creators, actively nurturing learning and unlearning. They are self-selecting, emerging from their contexts with ideas to contribute to the movement. Shikshantar's learning agenda emerges from mutual dialogue among co-learners. Activists pursue their own initiatives, while building on and cross-fertilizing each other's projects. Examples include workshops on media awareness, non-competitive games, crafts using waste materials and clay toys; books on local artisans and Mewari stories; a youth magazine; projects to regenerate Mewari use; a video on pesticide factory impact; research on rainwater harvesting and water conservation; and rooftop organic farming.

### Learning

Shikshantar has sought to understand what sort of unlearning can best support people's development of their full potential as leaders. So far, they have identified: symbolic thinking that supports diverse modes of interpretation; resourcefulness; cooperation rather than competition; comfort with vulnerability to the unknown; openness to being a co-learner; self expression as

opposed to group-think; and confidence in leadership independent of position.

#### Development

Shikshantar has built support through gradual networking, allowing teachers and supporters committed to similar goals to self-select. Shikshantar's work has not been without challenges. In the course of pursuing Udaipur as a Learning City, it became apparent that many "educated" people continued to default to standard thinking. People accustomed to being spoon-fed or copying existing ways of doing things showed limited vision of their own. Worse, the default view still assigns responsibility for change to the government, and has minimal confidence that people's initiatives can work. In this context, even activists often suffer pressure from their families to re-integrate into the mainstream. Given all of these challenges, Shikshantar's hope remains in the fresh perspective and potential of youth.

## Kufunda

### Origination

Marianne Knuth founded the Kufunda learning initiative on a 327-acre farm in Ruwa, Zimbabwe in 2002. Half Danish and half Zimbabwean, Marianne saw how experiences and opportunities (or the lack thereof) affect people's view of what is possible. Witnessing the potential of many bright, capable people constrained by both material limitations and the lack of perceived alternatives, Marianne felt inspired to try to help break the cycle of poverty.

Kufunda works toward development of self-reliant communities, by supporting creativity and self-reliance among the people of those communities, starting with the belief that people already embody both of those qualities, if they can access that knowledge and find the confidence to act on it. Kufunda is also an exploration of whole and meaningful living. Marianne's own desire to live in a balanced and life-affirming way, in touch with nature, with time for body and spirit, shaped her design of the Kufunda learning community. At Kufunda, residents explore alternative ways of being together. Programs are also rooted in the intent that participants return to apply their learning in their communities, as

opposed to leaving for the city. Marianne hopes that Kufunda may unearth African wisdom and insights, such as the art of simplicity, that can help people in many parts of the world return to more nourishing and sustainable living. The first 3-month program in residence was launched with 15 youth in July 2002. Programs

Marianne describes Kufunda's learning as a process of expansion – of self, of vision, and of faith in community. Kufunda facilitates a process that seeks to enable each person's sense of self to unfold; broaden participants' sense of how things and could be; and engender a sense of life in community as a means to move forward. Kufunda incorporates two parallel programs in the pursuit of its vision.

Visioning and initiating the possible. This process begins with “reading our world,” looking at what is currently happening and possible alternatives. During this stage, participants seek to better understand themselves and their communities; learn from local elders and cultural traditions; explore existing self-sufficient practices; and evaluate community development challenges, possibilities and their drivers. The second phase, “Visualizing our dreams and developing our personal intention,” is a time of reflection and retreat, during which participants contemplate what they've learned so far, what is calling to be done, and how that

relates to their own passion, skills and interests. During the final stage, “Making it happen,” participants work together from the insights gleaned in the first two phases, to formulate ways in which they will act upon their visions, and pursue additional learning as required to do so.

Self-reliance skills. These activities include work in permaculture, a form of organic gardening; construction of inexpensive, ecological compost toilets; production of soap, lotion, candles, batiks and mushrooms. Participants also help to build Kufunda, contributing of their unique skills and talents to help make Kufunda more of a home. This program culminates in a project management course, designed to prepare participants to administer their own income-generating projects.

Throughout, Kufunda embodies its community. Daily gathering in circle provides a space for the village to come together, share and listen, deepening bonds of trust and connection. The program interweaves creative elements such as art, music, dance and theater as forms of expression, learning and being in community. Time for self such as morning silence, journaling and a full day solo medicine walk is also built in.

Participants

Kufunda's first program worked with 15 youth from both rural and high-density areas, ranging from 17-34 years of age. Participants came from a variety of backgrounds, including members of workers cooperatives; casual laborers, subsisting at minimum wage; and recent school graduates. Since the course, many of the participants have expressed the intention to pursue initiatives in their home communities based on learning from Kufunda. Participants have also expressed interest in helping Kufunda to implement a community currency system that will facilitate exchange among nearby communities, independent of the ability to access monetary currency.

In addition to working with youth, in February 2003 Kufunda will host its first group of older women. Participants in this group are often organizers within their communities, dedicating themselves to activities like caring for AIDS orphans, meeting shared community needs (i.e. for safe wells), or building savings clubs to prepare for the subsequent year's harvest. Programs with this group will include self-discovery and personal development; community building tools, including those from African heritage; permaculture; and practical skills such as project or financial management to help further their work.

Learning

Kufunda learned a lot from its first program. Creating space and conditions that allow people to speak from the heart, listen and meet deeply, and co-create can enable participants to experience deep shifts and changes. The full immersion experience of living together in community allows for such changes to occur relatively quickly. However, three months felt very brief relative to program goals. This observation posed the question of how best to support participants as they return to their communities to integrate their learning. Finally, the fact that more experienced participants appeared best able to contribute to and gain from the program led to the decision that subsequent youth courses will focus on the 22-35 age range.

#### Development

Marianne met with people in many rural communities to exchange ideas about Kufunda and what it could be. These visits also spread the word about Kufunda, inspiring application from participants. Pilot participants were selected via applications and a weekend of games, exercises, and team challenges to evaluate people's participation, contribution and interaction.

Kufunda has relied upon a number of partners in development. Individuals have contributed their skills in areas like



deep ecology, tai chi, connection to nature, personal discovery/self-esteem and spirituality. Individuals from the Fambidzanai permaculture center brought both compost toilets and organic gardening to Kufunda. The Self-Help Development Foundation did many of Kufunda's practical skills courses. An individual from the School of African Wisdom helped bring back original culture. Kufunda relies on private financial support, steering clear of governmental involvement, as it works towards independent, grassroots transformation.

### Engage!Interact

#### Origination

Tim Merry, Peter Merry and Arjen Bos founded Engage!InterAct in Holland in July 2001 as a training organization dedicated to the appreciation of diversity and furtherance of the values of respect, cooperation and creativity. Programs are based upon participants taking responsibility for their learning, and promote critical thinking, open-mindedness and decisiveness, in hopes of achieving a successful multi-cultural society, active and democratic citizenship, and self-empowering knowledge society.

In the context of our increasingly complex modern society, Engage!InterAct has focused on three primary challenges: working

with multi-culturalism and diversity; defining citizenship with active participation; and navigating the choices of the information age as a knowledge society. Engage!InterAct approaches these challenges with Open Source Learning (OSL), a paradigm which Engage!InterAct has developed based on its work, and other learning in the field. OSL works towards relationships that embody partnership, openness and transformation, and employ critical thinking and clear situational perception to guide thought and action. In short, Engage!InterAct believes we can all contribute to our well-being through respectful and understanding interactions. The organization promotes active engagement in creative cooperation, self-awareness and a sense of connection within the natural world.

## Programs

Engage!InterAct embraces experiential and self-empowering forms of learning, employing a variety of techniques and methods, including open source learning, integral thinking and spiral dynamics, experiential learning, Simplicity, open space technology, community music, interactive theater and circle facilitation.

Topics oriented toward both personal and organizational levels include: working with difference and diversity, conflict

transformation, training for trainers, mentor coaching, motivation and making connections, group dynamics, team building, group facilitation, diversity and intercultural groups, communication, profiting from diversity, working with change, ethics, integrity and social responsibility, project management, working with knowledge, intercultural learning, human rights education, participation in citizenship, social exclusion, globalization, ecology and sustainability, and lobbying and campaigning for change.

Engage!InterAct programs take many forms, including the following.

Training and consultancy. Engage!InterAct supports a variety of organizations, including NGOs, youth organizations, commercial organizations, and public sector organizations on issues like working with difference and diversity as sources of creativity and innovation, and other topics outlined above.

Open training courses. These 2-5 day workshops offer the opportunity for participants to experience realms like leadership by natural design, interactive theater, and open space technology.

Community music. The experience of making music with a wide variety of instruments provides a forum for exploring the analogous challenge of co-creating affirming structures in organizations with diverse people and tools.

Community and youth work. One example of such work is the Sellamaris youth project in Ondiep, Utrecht. The community requested this 60-week project to provide its 10-16 year olds an alternative to being on streets. The program gave youth a space to develop themselves, creating ownership, pride and teamwork. Experiential learning with the help of local volunteers included project development and implementation, task-based learning, discussion/reflection circles, performance, interactive theater, circus skills, music and drumming, simulations, and outdoor activities. Engage!InterAct worked with many stakeholders in the community to help create the conditions, skills and commitment to more permanent change. This project was jointly sponsored by private donations and local government.

Engaging projects These have included Media literacy study; Celebrating Diversity, via voice, percussion, interactive theater and drama therapy; Arts4Change, an international network of people using the arts for social change; to Cook and Unmask, using interactive cookery and theater as a means to explore group dynamics and communication; and Planet Simulation, an exploration in communication and negotiation.

Learning laboratory. This features ongoing workshops for experimentation and development of creative, interactive,

experiential, self-empowering ways of learning. Lab workshops are open 2 half days per week to Engage!InterAct staff, volunteers, and a limited number of external participants. Topics include many of those listed above. Methods include interactive image and forum theater, clowning, mime work, simulation, interactive music, deep ecology experiential activities, OST, feedback & evaluation circles.

Performance workshops. These workshops, held one day per week help participants develop experience in group work, self-confidence, working with uncertainty, body/heart/mind connection, and performance production. Methods applied include improvisation, acrobatics, circus skills, voice work, rhythm, mime, dance, sensory awareness, yoga, breathing, political theater, feedback theater, and theater of the oppressed.

International youth festival at Castle Borl. This festival provides an annual opportunity for Engage! to interact and exchange learning with a global network of young, like-minded leaders.

### Participants

Engage!InterAct works primarily with youth ages 18-30, as well as local, national and European organizations and companies, with a particular focus on international and multicultural groups.

Engage!InterAct has also collaborated with the European voluntary service program, supporting 6 volunteer interns for an 8 month program to learn about working with youth. This learning opportunity for the interns also helps Engage!InterAct to extend its outreach.

## LifeWorks

### Origination

Zoë and Una Nicholson created LifeWorks in February 2002 as a platform that would enable them to make their living in a life-affirming way that would bring joy and enrichment to them and those they came into contact with. In recognizing their own desire to put their energies toward work truly congruent with their values and essence, they realized that many others might seek similar fulfillment. Parting from their own experience, the founders envisioned a world in which many people could be and act differently. Could be awakened to their own possibilities and choices. Could discover or rediscover the joy of deep connection in community. Could find release in creativity and freedom through play. Could embrace ways to be more consequent with values of love for humanity and the resources of our earth. Realizing these possibilities, Zoë and Una created LifeWorks to foster people's

authenticity, courage and creativity, believing that with self-awareness people can awaken to stronger commitments and responsibilities to each other, their communities and the world. In so doing, ordinary people everywhere can lead the way toward making the world a safer, more peaceful, more affirming place for all beings.

### Programs

LifeWorks is not limited to a physical space. The founders describe it as more of a “traveling circus,” serving as a platform for projects which may evolve organically according to the inspiration of the founders or others. LifeWorks currently has three main components:

Creating space for learning. LifeWorks defines learning as the process which unfolds as we are present to ourselves and each other, which is forever unfolding as we live and grow. A process which, with awareness can be one of becoming more and more our true selves, individually and with each other. The first ongoing learning space created was PlayWorks, initiated in September 2002. PlayWorks provides a weekly opportunity for members to connect with each other and their creativity through play.

Calling into Being – Learning in Community. This is a year-long program, called Fostering Courage, Learning in Community.

Fostering Courage involves a peer-led learning community with shared leadership, based on the premise that learning will flow from the fact that everyone has gifts to share. This program began in August of 2002. It employs both Open Space Technology and Circle Practice in order to foster deeper connections between participants and their communities.

Hosting Space. LifeWorks embraces the fact that many can share wisdom and tools that deepen people's understanding of each other and their communities, and offers its platform for such interactions. The first such space that LifeWorks hosted was a PeerSpirit Practicum held in October of 2002, which created a forum for participants to be in a learning environment with Christina Baldwin and Ann Linnea. A workshop with Meg Wheatley is currently planned for January 2004.

### Participants

LifeWorks considers its target audience of participants to be anyone who is intrigued by the ideas, work, and energy of the organization. So far participants have varied greatly in age, though have come primarily from the white middle class. LifeWorks tends to attract people who are beginning to question, and awaken to their feelings and perceptions about themselves and the world



around them. People come because they are intrigued, sense they have lost the ability to play, want to learn something new, or desire to somehow be in community.

LifeWorks has promoted itself through word of mouth, leaflets, posters and email, and the From the Four Directions network. So far, PlayWorks has attracted over 30 people, Learning in Community has 12 participants, and the PeerSpirit practicum had 13 people.

#### Development

LifeWorks is a not-for-profit worker's cooperative. The founders have funded initial development, and subsidized a portion of participants in order to build the program. They hope that within a year LifeWorks will generate sufficient revenue to pay them for their work.

The openness to hosting space for other practitioners with programs or messages is one of the ways in which LifeWorks has been able to initiate activities quickly. This symbiotic relationship offers the benefits of collaboration and support to LifeWorks and broadens the scope of resources accessible to LifeWorks participants, while offering those other practitioners a conduit to a new market.

LifeWorks has also relied upon others for complementary skills such as design, web communication, wisdom and inspiration. They draw from the work of many people, including Christina Baldwin, Harrison Owens, Meg Wheatley and many others.