

Bridge-Builder



Bulletin n°1, June 2013

A BRIDGE-BUILDER: Nipun Mehta

A THINKER: Alexandre Rojey

A PRACTITIONER: Goéry Delacôte

**CONFERENCE: International Conference Imagine the
Common Good: dedicated to the Future of the Youth**

NEWS: Some French recent Litterature!



COMMON GOOD FORUM
Global & Local Bridge-Builder

EDITORIAL

By Violaine HACKER

Common Good Forum



Violaine HACKER
Common Good Forum

The Common Good Forum represents an Initiative to bring together experts and practitioners in various fields to reconsider economics and other areas of human enterprise with an emphasis on the notion of common good. This Initiative aims to empower people to engage in actively re-thinking economic, political and cultural issues for the benefit of the global and local common good. As a community, we collaborate to understand the perception of the common good, and shape a common vision for the governance of the Commons.

As a Bridge-BUILDER, the Common Good Forum promotes cross-cultural understanding and cooperation among local and global communities. It brings together Thinkers and Practitioners for Innovative Commons-Based Solution:

1. to facilitate exchange of information and best practices and build synergy between local civil society organisations with decision-makers.
2. to raise the profile and the visibility of innovative policy and practices of local actors on the global scene.

In order to build 'Unity in Diversity', the forum puts a keen emphasis on dialogue between seniors, the young, and those in middle years. Bringing together the experience of seniors, the energy of those in middle years, and the vision and passion of the young, the Forum will collect, amplify and communicate productive ideas and best practices to support people and communities locally and globally engaged in creating new models. In that respect, we will encourage programs dedicated to the understanding of values and principles related to the common good, and sharing vision with closely related philosophy such like 'Ubuntu' for instance... You are also welcome to participate to the conference 'Imagine the Common Good' (25-28 August 2013).

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Common Good Forum

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CONFERENCE

International Conference in Paris on the Common Good

By Violaine HACKER

Common Good Forum



International Conference in Paris dedicated to the future of the Youth 'Imagine the Common Good'

Let's Share Best Practices and Write a Common Declaration

We are concerned about the Youth facing a serious socioeconomic context and many other challenges related to the commons. Indeed new ecosystems are creating a new consciousness around our commons.

We can now imagine and develop a common alphabet, not only to envision the best practices, but also to imagine how people could get empowered through capabilities, so that they can assume leadership.

In that respect, we will wonder how to shape a Common Vision and design Innovative Solutions. Our aim is to contribute to the understanding of the perception of the common good, and identify best practices to design a governance of the Commons. This represents an evolutionary challenge to the economic and political status quo. Indeed we are reorienting our perception of the world in order to develop new ways of managing resources, interrelationships, governing structures, values and standards. Consequently, this conference represents an opportunity to promote an intergenerational Dialogue to inspire a creative leadership for the common good, both in the private and public spheres. From Oxford (2002) to Paris (2013), this conference benefits from the expertise of a Decade of a Global Partnership based on Declaration.

We will share vision and best practices to promote the common good, the creativity as well as the transmission of good incentives and capabilities for young and senior people.

Eventually we invite participants to bring their imagination to draw the Paris Declaration as a Social Charter.

Also we will use a socratic process in order to draw conclusion and prepare output and action plan.

Indeed we will study how the concept of the Common Good fit for helping to address the serious complex and inter-connected challenges (25 August).

Firstly we will discuss on how to share values in a divided world (26 August). In that respect, we will imagine how to develop innovative solutions and best practices (27 August).

In that capacity, on 28 August, we will draw conclusion and design of a Social Charter : the Declaration of Paris.





A BRIDGE-BUILDER

TESTIMONY

5 Reasons to Serve: What doing things for others does for ourselves

By Mr Nipun MEHTA

Founder of ServiceSpace.org

Nipun Mehta is the founder of Servicespace.org, an incubator of gift-economy projects that aims to shift our collective narrative towards greater generosity. This Testimony is a result of a collaborative effort that included several ServiceSpace coordinators.

At the height of the dot-com boom in 1999, a few tech-savvy friends and I walked into a homeless shelter to give without any strings attached. Our motivation? We just wanted to serve, and quickly discovered that such a practice of selfless giving is something that we all have access to, no matter who we are or what we do.

Our trip to the homeless shelter led to us building a website for them at no charge. That experiment in giving blossomed into an organization called ServiceSpace, which went on to develop and gift websites to thousands of small nonprofits. But the ripples didn't stop there. ServiceSpace has now evolved into a remarkable incubator for dozens of projects, including an online good news portal, «Smile Cards» that spread kindness, and a gift-economy restaurant in Berkeley and rickshaw in India—all touching millions of people.

It's not just what we do that matters, but the inner impetus behind our action that really counts.

While the external impact of these projects is tremendous, what is most striking

is the fact that ServiceSpace doesn't fundraise, has no staff, and remains 100 percent volunteer-run.

Everyone involved is driven simply by the volition to grow in service. In a world dominated by financial incentives that appeal to a consumption mindset, ServiceSpace is a counterculture invitation to engage in small acts of generosity, continually shifting towards a mindset of inspired contribution.

It's a beautiful fact that in practicing kindness, we can't help but deepen our understanding of how inner and outer change are fundamentally intertwined. Here are five reasons to serve that we've discovered through our own journey.

Serve to discover abundance: the radical shift from «me» to «we.»

When you serve, you discover that often the most important things you have to offer are not things at all. You start to uncover the full range of resources at your disposal—your time, presence, attention—and recognize that the ability to give stems from a state of mind and heart, a place much deeper than the

material. Inspired by the possibilities this opens up in every moment, you begin to discover humble opportunities to serve—everywhere.

This process begins a shift from a me-orientation to a we-orientation. You start to look at people and situations with an eye for what you can offer them, and not vice versa. You break the tiresome tyranny of questions like «What's in it for me?» The mindset shifts from consumption to contribution. Paradoxically, when serving in this way, you are no longer operating from a space of scarcity. Your cup fills and overflows.

Serve to express gratitude

When you acknowledge the fullness of your life, you can manifest a heart of service in any situation. In that sense, service doesn't start when we have something to give—it blossoms naturally when we have nothing left to take. And that is a powerful place to be. We begin to play our part—first, by becoming conscious of the offerings receive, then by feeling gratitude for them, and finally by continuing to pay forward our gifts with a heart of joy.

Becoming conscious of the offerings we receive, then by feeling gratitude for them, and finally by continuing to pay forward our gifts with a heart of joy.

Yes, external change is required for the world to progress, but when coupled with inner transformation, it can affect the world in a radically different way. «We can do no great things—only small things with great love,» maintained Mother Teresa, a woman who made a difference in the lives of millions. It's a matter of what we focus on. In other words, it's not just what we do that matters, but the inner impetus behind our action that really counts.

Serve to transform yourself

Any time we practice the smallest act of service—even if it's only holding a door for somebody with a full heart that says, «May I be of use to this person»—that kind of giving changes the deeply embedded habit of self-centeredness. In that brief moment, we experience other-centeredness. That other-centeredness relaxes the patterns of the ego, a collection of unexamined, self-oriented tendencies that subtly influence our choices. This is why no true act of service, however small, can ever really be wasted.

To serve unconditionally in this way takes practice and constant effort. But with time and sharpened awareness, we begin to brush against the potential for transformation that is embedded in every act of generosity. It's a realization that when you give, you actually receive. You begin to internalize this, not at the intellectual level but by experience.

Serve to honor our profound interconnection

Over time, all of those small acts, those small moments, lead to a different state of being—a state in which service becomes increasingly effortless. And as this awareness grows, you

inevitably start to perceive beyond individualistic patterns: Each small act of service is an unending ripple that synergizes with countless others.

As Rachel Naomi Remen puts it, «When you help, you see life as weak. When you fix, you see life as broken. When you serve, you see life as whole.» With that understanding, we begin to play our part—first, by becoming conscious of the offerings we receive, then by feeling gratitude for them, and finally by continuing to pay forward our gifts with a heart of joy. Each of us has such gifts: skills, material resources, connections, presence—everything we consider ourselves privileged to have. And when we actually start to use our gifts as tools to facilitate giving, we deepen our understanding of relationships and start to sync up with this vast «inner-net»

Serve to align with a natural unfolding

When we increasingly choose to remain in that space of service, we start to see new things. The needs of the current situation become clearer, we become instruments of a greater order and consequently our actions become more effortless. When a group of people perform this kind of service as a practice, it creates an ecosystem that holds a space, allowing value to emerge organically. All of this indirect value, the ripple effect, has space and time to add up, synergize with other ripples, and multiply into something completely unexpected. In humble fashion these ripples continue to seed unpredictable manifestations. Such an ecosystem can have its plans and strategies, but places more emphasis on emergent co-creation. So a lot of the ripples will remain unseen for years; some perhaps will be the basis for a seventh-generation philanthropy. It doesn't matter, because they are unconditional gifts.

What each of us can do, on a personal level, is make such small offerings of service that ultimately create the field for deeper change. The revolution starts with you and me.

The programs of ServiceSpace centered around people - 341,235 members – propose :

- 1. Inspirational Content:
KarmaTube, DailyGood and Awakenin.**
- 2. Gift-Economy Projects:
Conversations, Karma Kitchen, Help Others.**
- 3. Volunteer and Non-Profit Support:
ProPoor, CF Sites, Pledge Page.**

See: www.servicespace.org

A THINKER

POSITION

Find a vision

By Mr Alexandre ROJEY

Fondation Tuck



Alexandre Rojey is involved in futures studies and the development of the Worldview concept, through his present activities leading the think tank IDées (Innovation, Sustainable development, Environment and Society) within the Tuck Foundation in France. He teaches green technologies at IFP, where he was the former Director for Sustainable Development. He is also the former Chairman of CEDIGAZ, an International Association operating for Gas companies. School Former Director for Sustainable Development at IFP and, as well as School Former Director at IFP.

The crisis of the current worldview

The global crisis we face today is not only economic, social and ecological. It is also a crisis of worldview. The 'market' has become the ultimate, and only, metric of society. In this context, it has become very difficult to take actions in the general interest, to ensure the sustainability of the planet, and hence of human society.

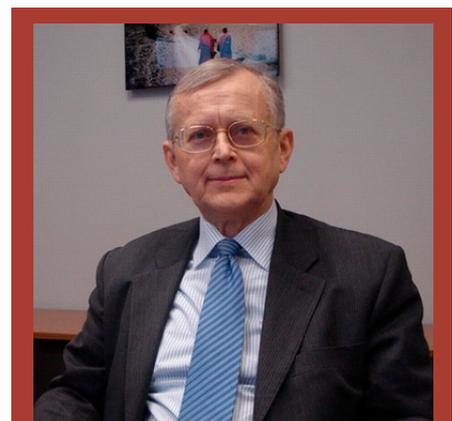
Globalization has been designed on the model of neoliberal ideology, according to the principles of self-organizing economy. High energy/high-tech systems evolve towards greater complexity - such systems are designed only to benefit themselves - thus their internal logic excludes the public interest. Given the logic of profit maximization, it is difficult to preserve the commons, whether related to the biosphere, or the social or cultural spheres.

The loss of a sense of transcendence leads to a flat, 2-dimensional, disenchanted view of the world, thus making it difficult to create the necessary motivation to envision and build a different future. In such a world, the triumph of power alone becomes supremely dominant.

The Enlightenment notion of the world - stressing the imminent over the transcendent - no longer seems able to generate a new vision for our time and circumstances.

Building a vision

It is impossible to predict the future, even if major events such as global warming and the depletion of natural resources can be widely anticipated. However, despite all the



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current uncertainties, it is a moral duty for our generation to act on behalf of the future human community, at a time when the challenges transcend not only space but time as well. Undertaking such a project involves generating a vision that overcomes the current contradictions between the imperatives of sustainable development and economic logic.

This involves replacing the current dominant worldview, with its insurmountable contradictions, with a new vision which is comprehensive and consistent, and harmonizes the contradictions that are tearing global society apart in our time. Because of the inevitable progression of globalization in some form, the essential principles of its new structure must be accepted globally.

Rather than offering simplistic solutions to complex problems, it is preferable to take the path of accelerating evolutionary

change, acting on existing social levers such as education to promote understanding of cultures through intense intercultural exchanges, and to build a common set of values at the deepest level of the human personality.

Find universal values

Reason, inspired by a new universal consciousness, can lift humanity out of its current rut, to help us and our descendants in our quest for meaning. The great legacy of the Enlightenment - of reason over superstition, and of discovery over dogma - remains an important achievement. But the current interpretation of the Enlightenment - of measurement over meaning, and of quantity over quality - is exhausted, and no longer capable of overcoming the current challenges. A successful future society will need to find a new system of values at the confluence of science, philosophy and spirituality.

The path to this transformation of the current global system is not obvious. We have been building toward this crisis for several centuries, and solutions will not be forthcoming overnight. Thus to start, we need to recognize that the current model - that there is always a technical fix to every technical problem - no longer works. It is abundantly clear that the belief that material progress inevitably leads to moral progress is an illusion.

Nothing at this time ensures that such a transition will take place soon. If such change proves impossible to achieve, some fear that humanity will enter a new Dark Ages. Nonetheless such a passage - difficult though it may be - may also help regenerate the values of courage, integrity and honor.

If humanity undergoes and survives such a period of transformation, it may hopefully lead us to a new Renaissance.



Alexandre Rojey is the author of various publications and several books. His last book, *La réinvention du monde. Entre utopie et principe de réalité* ('Reinventing our world : between Utopia and Pragmatism') was published in France in 2013.

To exit the current crisis, he advocates an approach to find a coherent vision encompassing the economy, environment and society.

Such a Future would be guided by values that are supposed to be universal in scope, while being compatible with the cultural diversity of different nations.



A PRACTITIONER

PORTRAIT

Dr Goéry DELACOTE

By Violaine HACKER

Common Good Forum

Dr. Goéry Delacôte has been involved in science and education throughout his career. Because of this, he brings practical insight to non-profit operations and fundraising, invaluable strategic business acumen, and an international perspective to the fields of education, science and economics. He has also overseen development of a world-wide network of science centres as well as national centres for teachers' professional development, and on-line content for very large audiences.

In March 2012, Dr. Delacôte was awarded "Officier de la Légion d'Honneur" - the French equivalent of knighthood - for his work in science education. He has extensive experience in three countries: France, United Kingdom and the United States.

In France, he is a renowned French scientist, science educator and public servant. He holds a Ph.D. in solid-state physics from the École Normale Supérieure in Paris. He is Professor emeritus of Physics at the University of Paris, Vice-Chairman of the Board of the Palais de la Découverte, and for nine years has been the Director of the Science and Technology Information Division of the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS).

He is currently Chairman of the Exploradome in Vitry-sur-Seine, France, as well as President of the Alliance Française Ile de France-Paris. While Director of the Science and Technology Information Division of the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS) in Paris, France, he was responsible for the creation, design, and implementation of the INIST Group, the national research library of France.

In 1979, Dr. Delacôte assembled a scientific team to create La Villette, a national science and technology museum that opened in Paris in 1986. He is the author of *Savoir Apprendre* (Knowing

How to Learn), published in French, which focuses on education reform in France and the United States. The book shares its title with a French non-for-profit organization founded in 1997 by Dr. Delacôte with the object of creating a mini-Exploratorium in France, called the Exploradome.

In the United States, during his tenure as Executive Director of the Exploratorium in San Francisco (1991-2005), he was instrumental in driving the museum into global recognition as the finest and most innovative science one anywhere.

During that time, he targeted private and public funding sources to raise over \$200 million to support the Exploratorium's capital and operations costs, as well as growing the annual budget from \$7 million to \$28 growing the annual budget from \$7 million to \$28 million. Eventually this museum was voted the best science centre in the world in 2005! In addition to expanding the museum's facilities at the nearby Presidio National Park, he concentrated efforts on the redevelopment of major exhibition areas, guiding the activity of the museum into new



areas, including the important domains of research in life sciences and cognition. In creating a “networked” Exploratorium, Dr. Delacôte focused not only on bringing it to the world, but also on bringing the world to the museum. The very essence of an informal science center is the daily challenge of making the fundamentals of science as accessible to as many people as possible.

In the United Kingdom, he also served as CEO of At-Bristol - a UK-based science center (2006-2012). On his arrival, it was clear that the centre’s financial model was not viable, so that he began fundraising. In the US, a museum could raise £1.5 million in one evening, but such was not the case in the UK. He remains a vocal critic of the lack of government funding of science centres. On top of securing the financial sustainability of the centre, he worked to improve science education, promote public engagement, and provide a public platform for debates about the development of science and technology ... not just in Bristol, but throughout the whole country!

Indeed science centres place an emphasis on enabling their visitors to interact with exhibits and test theories themselves. At-Bristol became a leading independent science centre. It developed and launched several successful exhibi-

tions including ‘Animate It!’, ‘All About Us’ and the upcoming ‘Our World - no more waste’.

Obviously this entails developing capacity to design exhibits and interactive projects in-house, requiring top-level experts in the country to come and work in Bristol. For instance, the first interactive exhibition he oversaw at At-Bristol was ‘Inside DNA’, largely supported by a £1.5 million Wellcome Trust Capital Award. Opened in Bristol in late 2007, the exhibition will continue to tour the UK through this year.

The Common Good and the Economy

In 2012, back in France, he published ‘Pour une Economie du bien commun’ (‘Toward an Economy of the Common Good’) with a preface of Michel Rocard, former French Prime Minister. On the basis of his various experiments, he advocates in favor of an approach based on the notion of the ‘common good economy,’ and emphasizes some major underlying issues. Indeed he proposes some comparisons between the European and the U.S. models (tax system, role of the state, global strategy, role of creativity and innovation).

Beyond that, he also thinks decision-makers and activists must develop a collec-

tive consciousness of the ‘common good economy’ (by means of communications, national meetings, the professionalization of this sector, on-going assessment, and a good public representation). To this end, Dr. Delacôte strongly suggests a series of measures to be adopted soon, such as: adequate services within the administration, a reflection of the overall strategic development, the creation of another status to the non-for-profit organisation. Moreover he thinks the three sectors of the economy – public, private and philanthropy - could find good interaction. He particularly insists on the crucial weight of influential foundations in the United States, such as the Wellcome Trust. On top of that, he notes this area represents a source of social innovation. In that respect, the local level remains essential, and consequently it becomes necessary to bring together best practices through suitable governance, in particular via the promotion of good social practice, and a clear role of the Board.

In the end, he is convinced this is not only a question of structure, but it depends much more on Human Resources. Therefore ensuring the well-being of employees, and promoting a good education become crucial for such a Sustainable Economy.

IN THE NEWS

Some French recent Litterature!



Collectif Le pacte civique, penser, agir, vivre autrement en démocratie. Le pacte civique : inventer un futur désirable pour tous, Chronique sociale, 2013.

Convinced that social change can only come from a new impetus among each of us, a French group of organizations and activists from the civil society have developed a kind of social charter. As a Civic Covenant, it represents a call to invent a desirable future for all of us. As indicated in its tribute in January 2013, dedicated to Stéphane Hessel, this group continues to be outraged by growing inequality in society, and the corruption in the still-uncontrolled financial sector. The group is keenly aware of the costs to Nature due to the excesses of productivism and the pollution of vital commons. They do worry about rising debt, unemployment, exclusion, violence, and are shocked by the degradation of our democracy. They consequently wrote 32 commitments. Taking into account the long view, the proposals argue for: a learning society, more justice, active fraternity, fair and low-carbon development, a renewed democracy, a Europe of citizens, and a new law for social housing.

Georges Amar, Aimer le futur, la prospective, une poétique de l'inconnu, ed. FYP, 2013.

We can not see the horizons of tomorrow with the words of the old days. This challenging test - innovative in form and in content - offers an original foresight approach: the release of the grip of old paradigms, frozen in words, to envision new, credible, attractive, sensitive and promising models. These would enrich our eyes and renew the languages with which we think, feel, understand the past, present and future. It is an opening to potential innovations, that might provide tools to prepare for the future, both in terms of foresight and innovation, and in a broader cultural sense.

La reconnaissance. Des revendications collectives à l'estime de soi, La petite bibliothèque de sciences humaines, 2013.

Living in communities shows more than ever the need of everyone to have, and be seen to have, good self-esteem. In the eyes of others, the individual finds confirmation of his or her existence. He feels both similar and different. This need for recognition affects both individuals and groups: at work, in marriage, in legal and societal areas, in private or public organizations. While this discussion is not recent, this book presents a clear summary of the various theories of recognition: from Rousseau to Axel Honneth through Hegel and Marx.

Roger Nifle, Le sens du bien commun. Pour une compréhension renouvelée du bien des communautés humaines, Temps Présent, 2011.

In a world marked by multiple visions, the notion of 'common good' requires us think about the potential orientation given to human communities. This book is based on practical experience of management of private companies and local authorities, his thoughts about the future of communities. First, it goes beyond the impasse of individualism. Indeed, becoming more human supposes to take into account the presence of other people: by the test of otherness and by constructing a serene identity necessarily rooted in one or more communities. On the other hand, this approach also overcomes republican universalism, ethnocentrism, or denying the other people the ability to invent a singular path towards universal.

