

# COMPASSION AND THE SDGs

*An architecture for repositioning  
compassion in the SDGs*





## ASSESSING THE MIDPOINT

The year 2022 signals the midpoint in the timeline to achieve the United Nations General Assembly Sustainable Development Goals. Yet, **the further we progress with scientific advances and technological solutions, the farther away the SDG finish line** seems to move. A failure to connect physical systems with human systems reveals the inherent weaknesses in our siloed approaches to human and planetary health. Furthermore, the **COVID-19 pandemic shocked the systems** upon which each goal is dependent.

To avoid failure we need a **radical** and urgent **repositioning of values** and virtues as the drivers and custodians of the change required.

“  
*If we realize  
our ambitions  
across the full  
extent of the  
Agenda, the  
lives of all will  
be profoundly  
improved and  
our world will  
be  
transformed  
for the better.*”

## A PARADIGM SHIFT

The complexity of achieving the ambitious SDG targets has forced us to divide and focus on our siloes of expertise. We have overlooked the importance of **human connection** and **relationships** in alleviating the suffering the SDGs were designed to overcome.

**Compassion** is a lens that can shift how we achieve the SDGs and the likelihood we will succeed. Our humanness and deep emotional connection to the suffering of others defines why and how we should act—*collectively* and *synergistically* across the 17 interconnected goals.

We need to **reactivate** the **human chain of compassion** that motivated the powerful vision to establish the SDGs, and **scale compassion** so it moves from being an individual activity to one that shapes **systems thinking**.

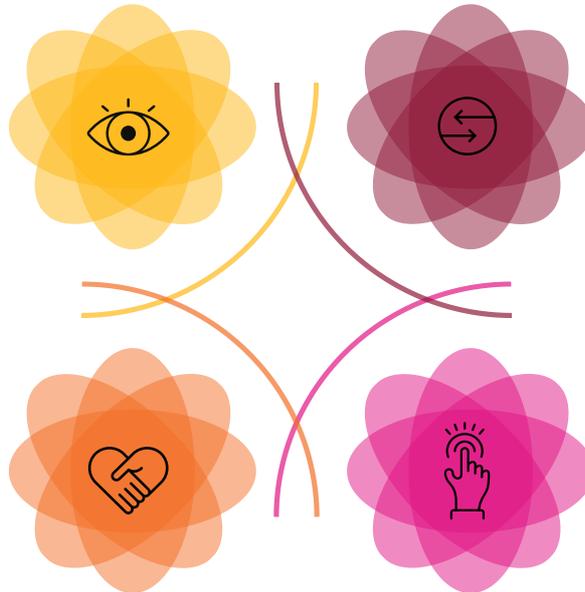
# COMPASSION

[ kuhm • pa • shn ] *noun*

The 17 goals set out a vision for the world to alleviate and prevent future suffering. Paradoxically, the technical approaches and bureaucracies we built to achieve the SDGs dissociate us from the human connection that motivated us to establish them in the first place. This **4-part compassion process**<sup>^</sup> helps us re-center the human connection in our work.

## 01 NOTICING SUFFERING

An awareness of suffering of humans and our planet was the driving force in creating the SDGs. Each SDG describes and quantifies the suffering it intends to alleviate.



## 02 INTERPRETING SUFFERING

Realizing all humans experience suffering awakens a sense of togetherness. We must understand the drivers and consequences of suffering, as well as the pathways to alleviate it.

## 03 FEELING EMPATHY

Beyond facts and figures, the SDGs ask us to be present with and respond emotionally to other people's suffering.

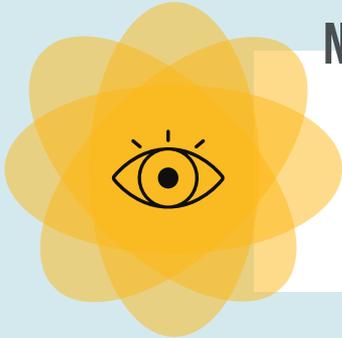
## 04 TAKING ACTION

Taking action to alleviate suffering is the heart of compassion & the SDGs. Activating the conditions for flourishing requires "acting with."

<sup>^</sup>Worline, M. & Dutton, J. (2017). *Awakening Compassion at Work: The quiet power that elevates people and organizations.*

“When compassion lies at the heart of the structures and systems needed to deliver the SDGs, people are not only placed at the center, but their individual and collective ability to bring about change is realized.”

# HOW COMPASSION GUIDES US TO ACHIEVE THE SDGs



## NOTICING

Reveals the suffering experienced by those impacted by the world's challenges.

Re-centers people and communities at the heart of the goals, targets, and indicators.

01

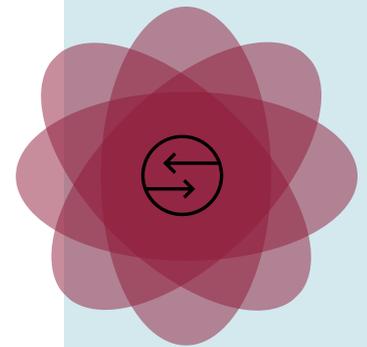
## INTERPRETING

Compels us to regard the suffering of the planet and other human beings as our own suffering.

Underscores the importance of addressing equity, inclusion, and human rights to achieve all goals.

Facilitates an understanding of why the SDGs must be treated as an integrated collective.

Reveals where we have unintentionally contributed to current barriers/stagnation in achieving the goals.



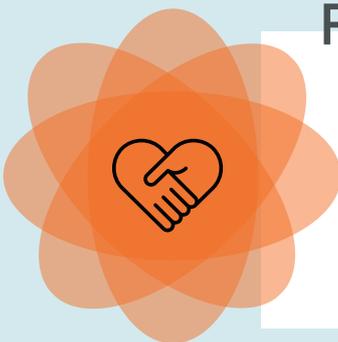
02

## FEELING EMPATHY

Reconnects us with our humanness and facilitates emotional connectedness with each other.

Highlights the essential need for relationality to achieve the goals.

Motivates courageous conversations that embrace complexity and conflict to ensure solutions empower, endure, and provide dignity and security.



03

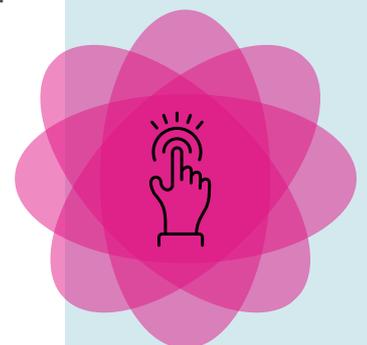
## TAKING ACTION

Awakens a sense of shared destiny and compels us to act to ensure the outcome of that destiny.

Commits us to preventive action to avoid future suffering. Motivates us to challenge inaction.

Reveals the importance of horizontal co-creation with communities—not "doing to" or "doing for."

Overcomes siloed technocratic approaches to promote coordinated, collective action across goals.



04

# THE INTERCONNECTED NATURE OF THE SDGs

“They are integrated and indivisible and balance the three dimensions of sustainable development: the economic, social, and environmental.”

TRANSFORMING OUR WORLD: THE 2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

**Compassion allows us to comprehend the interconnected and mutually reinforcing nature of the SDGs.**

The wholeness and wellness of the world depends on all 17 goals being **met concurrently**. We cannot reduce poverty without education, if healthcare is unavailable, or if food and water are inadequate. We cannot achieve inclusive and sustained economic growth without also achieving gender equality and peaceful societies.

The SDGs need to be treated as an **integrated collective**, rather than a set of separate, disparate goals. Compassion allows us to recognize our mutual suffering—our **common humanity**—and in doing so, enables us to draw a thread through our siloed technical spaces to connect all SDGs.

Compassion changes the focus of action—from doing *to* and *for* people, to actions *with*, *by*, and *as communities* empowered to collectively alleviate suffering. Through this, we can see the mutual benefit from **acting together** for humanity to flourish.

THE VALUE OF COMPASSION IS EXEMPLIFIED IN SDG17, *PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS*. WE MUST NURTURE AND SUSTAIN STRONG HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL PARTNERSHIPS. WE MUST MAKE SPACE TO FACILITATE COURAGEOUS CONVERSATIONS ABOUT BOTH SUFFERING AND FLOURISHING, AND EMBRACE—NOT AVOID—COMPLEXITY AND CONFLICT. SUCH A SOCIAL ARCHITECTURE IS THE ENGINE ROOM TO ACHIEVE ALL OTHER GOALS.

17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS





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# END POVERTY IN ALL ITS FORMS EVERYWHERE

**COVID-19, climate change, and conflict have led to the first rise in extreme poverty in a generation.**

## NOTICING

We are in a new landscape of poverty and suffering. In 2020, an additional 119-124 million people were pushed back into extreme poverty. Though the "new poor" are mostly urban-situated, 79% of the world's poor still live in rural areas. Women, children, and marginalized communities continue to be most vulnerable to the adverse effects of extreme poverty.

## INTERPRETING/EMPATHIZING

To alleviate suffering caused by widespread poverty, we must recognize where and why our global systems fail to imbue worth upon human beings and ecosystems. Inequitable global power dynamics is a source of injustice and structural suffering.

## TAKING ACTION

Organizational structures that emphasize trust, inclusion, respect, and collaboration can create compassionate economies of worth that generate human prosperity. The rise of Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG)-focused investments demonstrates how organized compassion can have an impact on sustainable development progress. Responsible supply chain management that emphasizes fair wages is key to lifting agricultural and manufacturing workers out of poverty. Government focus on expanding social protection is also crucial for providing relief from extreme poverty for the most vulnerable.

**1 NO  
POVERTY**



**751.5**

**MILLION  
PEOPLE LIVE  
IN EXTREME  
POVERTY  
(1 IN 5  
CHILDREN)**

**ONLY**

**1 IN 10**

**OF THE WORLD'S  
LARGEST  
BUSINESSES  
HAVE LIVING  
WAGE  
COMMITMENTS**

**50%**

**OF THE  
WORLD'S  
POPULATION  
IS NOT  
COVERED BY  
SOCIAL  
PROTECTION  
MEASURES**



**“POVERTY DEHUMANIZES THOSE WHO ARE POOR. CREATING MEANINGFUL EMPLOYMENT GIVES PEOPLE AN OPPORTUNITY TO PROVE TO THEMSELVES AND TO THEIR COMMUNITIES THEY ARE CAPABLE OF CARING FOR THEMSELVES AND CONTRIBUTING TO THEIR COMMUNITIES' WELL-BEING, THUS REGAINING THEIR LOST HUMANITY.”**

2 ZERO  
HUNGER



1 IN 3

PEOPLE IN  
THE WORLD  
DO NOT HAVE  
ACCESS TO  
ADEQUATE  
FOOD

ONLY

2/3

OF FOOD  
PRODUCED IN  
THE WORLD IS  
CONSUMED

50%

OF CHILDREN  
UNDER 5 DIE  
DUE TO  
UNDER-  
NUTRITION

## END HUNGER, ACHIEVE FOOD SECURITY AND IMPROVED NUTRITION, AND PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

There is enough food produced globally to feed everyone. But if current patterns persist, we will not achieve zero hunger by 2030.

### NOTICING

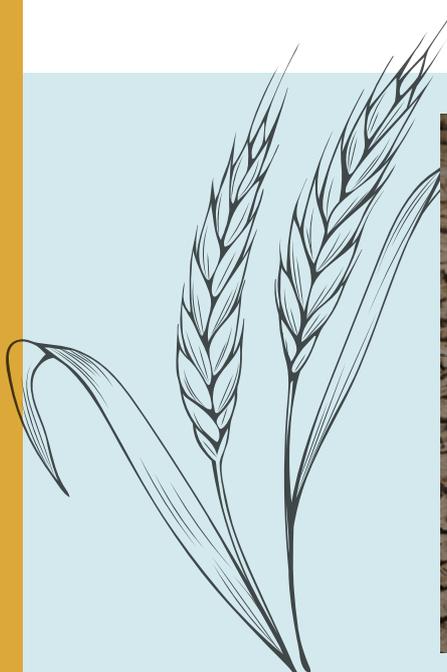
Small-scale farmers, herders, and fishermen generate 70% of the global food supply, yet they are the most vulnerable to food insecurity. Climate change, soil degradation, and water scarcity threaten sustainable agriculture. Undernutrition is most harmful to children, increasing the frequency and severity of illness and diminishing cognitive development. One-third of reproductive-age women suffer from anemia. Compassion can drive a growing awareness of food as a commodity of value that gives and sustains the value of life.

### INTERPRETING/EMPATHIZING

Hunger contributes to cyclical poverty and inter-generational suffering. Critically, we must understand that food security lies at the intersection of gender, equality, education, agriculture, peace and security, and climate justice issues. An empathic understanding of the experience of hunger and what it means for our collective well-being compels us to act.

### TAKING ACTION

Compassionate action requires engaging small-scale food producers and innovative business partnerships founded on trust, respect, inclusivity, and collaboration can begin to change the imbalance of food access and food deprivation. Building food systems that are context-specific and resilient to conflict and economic slowdown are as critical as reducing income inequality and women's empowerment.



**DR. AGNES KALIBATA**

UN SECRETARY GENERAL'S SPECIAL ENVOY FOR THE FOOD SYSTEM'S SUMMIT.

**"HUNGER ON THIS SCALE IS NOT A SYMPTOM OF #COVID19, IT IS A SYMPTOM OF A DYSFUNCTIONAL #FOODSYSTEM THAT BUCKLES UNDER PRESSURE AND ABANDONS THE MOST VULNERABLE FIRST."**

3 GOOD HEALTH  
AND WELL-BEING



810

WOMEN DIE  
EVERY DAY  
FROM  
PREGNANCY  
AND  
CHILDBIRTH

91%

OF THE WORLD  
POPULATION IS  
EXPOSED TO  
UNHEALTHY  
LEVELS OF AIR  
POLLUTION

7 OF 10

DEATHS  
WORLDWIDE  
STEM FROM  
NON-  
COMMUNICABLE  
DISEASES

# ENSURE HEALTHY LIVES AND PROMOTE WELL-BEING FOR ALL AT ALL AGES

Healthy populations are critical to sustainable development, but progress remains uneven and inequitable.

## NOTICING

The COVID-19 pandemic has unraveled decades of progress in health, highlighting how fragile global development is without robust and resilient health systems and without equitable and accessible health services. Even prior to the pandemic, global progress on many indicators had stagnated. The pace of progress varies considerably by region. For example, only 1% of the >10 billion doses of COVID vaccines have been administered in low-income countries. And two-thirds of maternal deaths occur in sub-Saharan Africa.

## INTERPRETING/EMPATHIZING

All SDGs influence—and are influenced by—health. Gender inequities, child labor, and inequitable access to WASH limit health attainment. Poor mental and physical health threatens education, limits economic opportunities, and increases poverty. COVID vaccine inequities are a microcosm of global health injustices and highlight a moral failure to care for others.

## TAKING ACTION

A compassionate lens reveals the urgency of ending the injustices that underpin poor health and development. Deep listening, cultural humility, and horizontal collaboration are essential to design and deliver locally tailored solutions. We need more acts of [global citizenship](#) among countries and across sectors, such as China sharing and adapting its strategies and lessons learned in malaria elimination with countries in Africa. Instead of protectionist policies, businesses and governments must contribute to health development, as healthy populations contribute to economic growth.



Maternity clinic in Darfur, Sudan

“I NEED TO BE BLUNT AND HONEST THAT THE WORLD IS NOT TREATING THE HUMAN RACE THE SAME WAY. SOME ARE MORE EQUAL THAN OTHERS.”

- DR. TEDROS GHEBREYSSUS,  
DIRECTOR-GENERAL, WHO

# ENSURE INCLUSIVE & EQUITABLE QUALITY EDUCATION AND PROMOTE LIFELONG LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL

Education is not just about knowledge acquisition—it changes attitudes and social norms, which accelerates progress toward many sustainable development goals.

## NOTICING

COVID-19 wiped out 20 years of education gains. Learning losses are greatest among the most marginalized groups: girls, impoverished schools, refugees and internally displaced persons, LGBTQIA+, and students experiencing disabilities. The proportion of students completing school is slow—from 2015-2020, it increased just 3% in primary and secondary school. Basic infrastructure in schools, like electricity and hand-washing facilities, is lacking in many countries.

## INTERPRETING/EMPATHIZING

Education is closely intertwined with many other goals. For example, gender equality—early marriage, gender-based violence, menstrual hygiene facilities, and rigid gender role ideology are all obstacles girls face in trying to get an education. Nearly half the world's schoolchildren depend on a daily meal at school for adequate nutrition. Insecurity and displacement affect children's ability to access education. And without education, progress towards ending poverty stagnates and children are vulnerable to child labor and trafficking.

## TAKING ACTION

Providing education for all requires a whole-system approach. Embracing compassionate values, such as trust, kindness, patience, and inclusion can lay the foundations for this approach. Compassion calls us to connect with our common humanity, which draws to the fore efforts like gender-responsive education frameworks that empower girls to be strong, independent thinkers and leaders. This not only drives progress towards this goal, but also the goals of gender equality and ending poverty.

“NOTHING COMPARES TO **BEING PRESENT**. YOU CAN ADDRESS DOUBTS OR QUESTIONS RIGHT AWAY, AND THERE'S ALSO A **HUMAN CONNECTION**. SCHOOL IS NOT JUST ABOUT IMPARTING KNOWLEDGE, IT'S ALSO TO **TEACH VALUES** LIKE RESPECT, AND TO SOCIALIZE STUDENTS.”

- FABIO DE LIMA, SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHER, SÃO PAULO, BRAZIL

4 QUALITY  
EDUCATION



1 IN 12

PRIMARY  
SCHOOLAGE  
CHILDREN  
LACK  
ACCESS TO  
EDUCATION

\$17 TN

LIFETIME  
EARNINGS LOST  
DUE TO COVID  
DISRUPTIONS IN  
EDUCATION

773

MILLION  
ADULTS  
WORLDWIDE  
CANNOT READ;  
MOST ARE  
WOMEN

# ACHIEVE GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWER ALL WOMEN AND GIRLS

Achieving gender equality requires attention and action on eliminating the root causes of discrimination against women.

## NOTICING

The persistence of gender inequality globally causes women and girls in every country to suffer in varying degrees in political, economic, social, and domestic spheres. Violence against women and girls is prevalent worldwide at all ages. Discriminatory laws and legal gaps continue to prevent women from enjoying their full human rights. Additionally, the socioeconomic fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic disproportionately affected women, pushing the world further off track from achieving gender equality by 2030.

## INTERPRETING/EMPATHIZING

The adverse impacts of global gender inequalities range from poor physical and mental health to chronic poverty and abuse. A universal lack of data on women's lives and women's underrepresentation in leadership and decision-making positions in both public and private sectors means their needs are often overlooked and misunderstood.

## TAKING ACTION

Bold new partnerships, like White Ribbon Alliance joining forces with Women's March Global, are strengthening global, intersectional organizing efforts to position women's rights as human rights and to promote compassionate, respectful maternal healthcare. Meanwhile, hyper-local solutions are emerging, like small women's collectives common in Southeast Asia pooling their resources to improve health, education, and other services in their communities. These efforts highlight how centering the shared suffering of women and working together in integrated, coordinated ways on global and local fronts can accelerate change.

5 GENDER  
EQUALITY



1 IN 3

WOMEN HAVE  
EXPERIENCED  
PHYSICAL OR  
SEXUAL VIOLENCE  
IN THEIR LIFE

WOMEN SPEND

2.5 TIMES

AS MANY HOURS  
AS MEN ON  
UNPAID  
DOMESTIC &  
CARE WORK

LESS THAN

1/3

OF PRIVATE  
SECTOR  
SENIOR & MIDDLE  
MANAGEMENT  
POSITIONS ARE  
HELD BY  
WOMEN



The connection between women's human rights, gender equality, socioeconomic development and peace is increasingly apparent.

— Mahnaz Afkhami —

6 CLEAN WATER  
AND SANITATION



EVERY  
**2 MINS**  
A CHILD DIES  
FROM A  
WATER-RELATED  
DISEASE

**1 IN 4**  
BILLION LACK  
ACCESS TO A  
TOILET

**80%**  
OF THE WORLD'S  
WASTEWATER IS  
NOT TREATED  
BEFORE  
RE-ENTERING  
THE  
ENVIRONMENT

## ENSURE AVAILABILITY AND SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF WATER AND SANITATION FOR ALL

Access to safe water, sanitation, and hygiene is foundational to human and planetary health and well-being. But meeting targets requires a four-fold increase in the pace of progress.

### NOTICING

Over the past 300 years, over 85% of the planet's wetlands have been lost due to population growth and climate change. Globally, women and girls spend 200 million hours every day collecting water, exposing them to risks of violence and physical injury. Moreover, 1 in 10 people lack access to safe drinking water and 1 in 4 lack access to improved sanitation facilities, resulting in nearly 1 million deaths per year.

### INTERPRETING/EMPATHIZING

Women and girls are disproportionately affected by the water crisis. Access to safe water and sanitation at home increases school attendance among girls and gives women time to pursue work that can help generate additional family income that breaks cycles of poverty. Ensuring freshwater supplies are managed equitably, sustainably, and peacefully, particularly amidst climate change, is critical to achieving the SDGs for safe water access, gender equality, health, education, poverty, and more. A compassionate lens helps us to better understand the multidimensional suffering caused by water scarcity, as well as the social and psychological impacts of poor water quality and lack of access to improved sanitation.

### TAKING ACTION

Improving the management of our water resources to meet domestic, industrial, agricultural, and environmental needs must double to meet targets. Water cooperation agreements between countries are especially important for managing transboundary waters. Empowering women is critical to solving the water crisis. Giving [micro-loans](#) to poor families to put a tap or toilet in their homes is a compassionate act that turns suffering into potential.



*Water is central to the 2030 Agenda to combat inequalities within and among countries; to build peaceful, just, and inclusive societies; to end poverty and hunger; and to protect human rights everywhere. Compassion helps us to reframe water as the connective element among us all as humans and between humans and the earth.*

7 AFFORDABLE AND  
CLEAN ENERGY



3 IN 10

PEOPLE  
GLOBALLY USE  
HARMFUL,  
POLLUTING  
COOKING FUEL

733

MILLION PEOPLE  
GLOBALLY  
LACK ACCESS TO  
ELECTRICITY.  
75% OF THEM  
LIVE IN SUB-  
SAHARAN AFRICA.

74%

OF THE  
SDG TARGETS  
REQUIRE  
ENERGY TO  
COMPLETE

## ENSURE ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE, RELIABLE, SUSTAINABLE AND MODERN ENERGY FOR ALL

Repositioning access to clean and affordable energy as a human right may counter the governing global economic system that profits from fossil fuel consumption.

### NOTICING

Fossil fuels have detrimental effects on human and environmental health, with climate change causing an estimated 5 million deaths globally every year. Additionally, household pollution from burning biomass causes cardiovascular and respiratory problems, with an estimated 4.3 million deaths each year. The war in Ukraine is driving up global energy prices and increasing energy insecurity.

### INTERPRETING/EMPATHIZING

Compassionate action requires energy. Most of the time when we use energy, we don't realize its economic, environmental, and social impacts. SDG7 is intertwined with many other goals. Energy is needed for running lifesaving medical equipment, doing schoolwork at night, producing and storing food, and running successful businesses. We simultaneously need to accelerate electrification in energy-poor countries, while also reducing global consumption of fossil fuels.

### TAKING ACTION

Compassionate action requires energy that does not, itself, lead to greater suffering. Accelerating and scaling inclusive energy transitions across emerging economies will power economic progress for a sustainable future. Collective action platforms, like the [Global Energy Alliance for People and Planet](#), deliver transformational programs for people across the developing and emerging world that creates millions of new jobs and avoids billions of tons of greenhouse gases. Through a combination of grid-based renewables, mini-grid, and rooftop solutions, underserved communities can access clean energy at an affordable cost. Engaging these communities in the design of energy projects ensures they feel seen and heard and their interests represented.



“THE URGENT NEED FOR EQUITABLE  
ACCESS TO MODERN ELECTRICITY AND  
THE OPPORTUNITY IT BRINGS COMES AT  
THE SAME TIME HUMANITY MUST UNITE  
TO ADDRESS THE CLIMATE CRISIS  
BEFORE THE DEVASTATION OF GLOBAL  
WARMING BECOMES IRREVERSIBLE.”

**8 DECENT WORK AND  
ECONOMIC GROWTH**



**266**  
MILLION  
WAGE EARNERS  
ARE NOT  
PAID A  
MINIMUM  
WAGE

**1 IN 10**  
CHILDREN  
GLOBALLY ARE  
ENGAGED IN  
CHILD LABOR

**MORE THAN  
60%**  
OF WORKERS  
LACK AN  
EMPLOYMENT  
CONTRACT

# PROMOTE SUSTAINED, INCLUSIVE & SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH, FULL & PRODUCTIVE EMPLOYMENT AND DECENT WORK FOR ALL

Healthy and sustainable economic growth is only possible if workers are valued as contributing to a united humanity and paid a living wage.

## NOTICING

The economic downturn caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, rising inflation, supply chain disruptions, and the conflict in Ukraine has pushed millions into poverty and diminished living standards around the world. Informal workers, women, and young people have been disproportionately affected. Women continue to be paid 19% less than men; they are also more likely to work in the informal economy where they are unprotected by labor regulations.

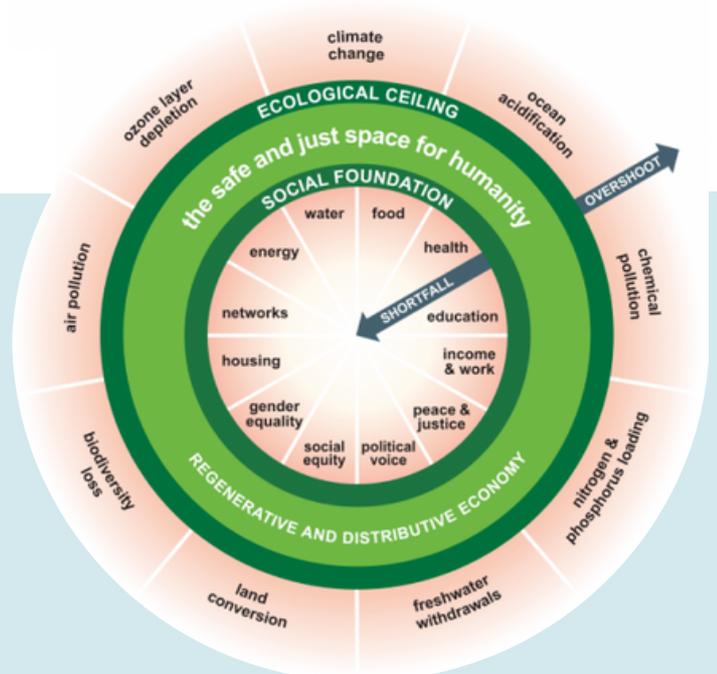
## INTERPRETING/EMPATHIZING

In their book, *Compassion at Work*, Monica Worline and Jane Dutton explain, “there’s always pain in the room.” The world is never free of suffering, but organizations that cultivate deep systems of compassion can prevent situations from worsening and can improve productivity and social and economic benefits. Decent work also requires acknowledging the human need to rest and recreate—over 745,000 people die every year due to strokes and heart disease related to overworking. A compassion lens challenges the prioritization of labour over mental and physical wellbeing.

## TAKING ACTION

[Doughnut economic principles](#) can help us conceptualize sustainable growth by meeting the needs of all people within the means of the living planet. The Doughnut consists

of two concentric rings: a social foundation, to ensure that no one falls short on life’s essentials, and an ecological ceiling, to ensure that humanity does not overshoot planetary boundaries that protect Earth’s life-supporting systems. Between these boundaries lies a doughnut-shaped space that is ecologically safe and socially just, where humanity can thrive.



## 9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE



# 1 BILLION

PEOPLE  
WORLDWIDE  
LACK ACCESS  
TO AN  
ALL-WEATHER  
ROAD

# 17%

OF PEOPLE IN  
THE LEAST  
DEVELOPED  
COUNTRIES  
LACK ACCESS  
TO A MOBILE  
BROADBAND  
NETWORK

ONLY

# 1 IN 5

COUNTRIES  
GLOBALLY  
HAVE REACHED  
GENDER PARITY  
IN RESEARCH

## BUILD RESILIENT INFRASTRUCTURE, PROMOTE INCLUSIVE & SUSTAINABLE INDUSTRIALIZATION, AND FOSTER INNOVATION

**A compassionate approach to infrastructure, industry, and innovation starts with communities instead of commodities.**

### NOTICING

Poor infrastructure prevents people from accessing essential services, like healthcare and education, and from bringing their goods to market, which perpetuates poverty. Small industrial enterprises often lack access to financial services and credit that would allow them to compete and grow. Innovation in science and technology is largely located in rich countries, as COVID-19 vaccine development showed, impacting the economic growth and health of poor nations.

### INTERPRETING/EMPATHIZING

Without infrastructure to prevent climate disasters, the climate-related death toll and destruction of homes and livelihoods will continue to increase. Without strong transportation routes within and between countries, we will continue to see slow and limited economic growth in emerging economies. Without investments in science and technology that prioritize gender parity in research and that promote the development of innovation infrastructure in LMICs, advancements in science and technology will continue to reinforce global inequities rather than support prosperous equitable societies.

### TAKING ACTION

Compassion encourages us to shift our central focus from profit to people to transform the structure of economies so they are inclusive and sustainable. For example, the [Asian Coalition for Community Action](#) has shown that people-led community development projects that are organizing and working together as networks can tackle problems of land, infrastructure, social and economic development, and housing at scale among the urban poor. Collective efforts like this are more likely to succeed in achieving the SDG agenda.



**"Imagine if we could empower millions of organisations across Asia & throughout the world to increase their capacity of helping more people."**

NICHOLAS OOI  
CEO OF BANTU

# REDUCE INEQUALITY WITHIN AND AMONG COUNTRIES

Compassion implores us to see inequality as intersectional.

## NOTICING

The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated global income inequality. The richest 1% now controls up to 40% of global assets, while the poorest half owns just 1%. Developing countries are still sorely under-represented in global economic and financial decision-making bodies, like the UN General Assembly and the International Monetary Fund.

## INTERPRETING/EMPATHIZING

Compassion implores us to ask: What do we want from economic growth? And for whom? Unjust patterns of inequality weaken the social fabric while also being a source of economic inefficiency and a driver of unsustainable environmental practices. Gender, race, ethnicity, migration, disability, and economic status intersect and multiply the burden of inequalities, which affects outcomes in education, income, health, and more.

## TAKING ACTION

Responses to inequalities need to be [intersectional](#), seeing people, places, power, and the planet through a lens of compassion. Fair wages, social protection programs, and official development assistance all play powerful roles in achieving equality. As inequalities are often due to systemic issues, multi-stakeholder collaboration is necessary to successfully achieve this goal. One bold example of addressing inequalities is the decision by the city of Evanston, Illinois, USA to pay reparations to Black residents who suffered housing discrimination as a way to redress historical wealth gaps.

10 REDUCED  
INEQUALITIES



1 IN 5

PEOPLE HAVE  
EXPERIENCED  
DISCRIMINATION  
THAT VIOLATES  
INTERNATIONAL  
HUMAN RIGHTS  
LAW

31.9

MILLION  
PEOPLE  
GLOBALLY ARE  
REFUGEES—  
THE HIGHEST  
NUMBER EVER

50%

OF THE  
WORLD'S  
POPULATION IS  
NOT COVERED  
BY SOCIAL  
PROTECTION  
MEASURES



“YOUR LIVING CONDITIONS ARE MUCH MORE DETERMINED BY WHAT IS OUTSIDE YOUR CONTROL—THE PLACE, TIME, AND SKIN YOU ARE BORN INTO—THAN BY YOUR OWN EFFORT, DEDICATION, AND CHOICES YOU MAKE IN LIFE.”

## MAKE CITIES AND HUMAN SETTLEMENTS INCLUSIVE, SAFE, RESILIENT & SUSTAINABLE

By 2030, 60% of the world's population is projected to reside in cities, making them a critical focus of compassionate design.

### NOTICING

Half of the global population lives in cities, where residents experience stark socioeconomic inequalities and poor environmental conditions. Cities occupy just 3% of Earth's land, but account for 60-80% of energy consumption. Rapid urbanization exerts pressure on fresh water supplies, sewage, and public health. Urban spaces also present safety and discrimination risks for women and other marginalized groups.

### INTERPRETING/EMPATHIZING

Many urban residents are dehumanized due to a lack of access to basic services. UN Secretary General, Antonio Guterres, explains, "Unplanned urban living leaves people vulnerable where access to quality healthcare is uneven, housing inadequate, water and sanitation lacking, transport infrastructure patchy, and jobs precarious." Yet urban development predominantly focuses on economic growth rather than fostering well-being and connectedness.

### TAKING ACTION

Compassion-centered solutions for SDG11 require simultaneous action on all other aspects of the SDG agenda. Urban development plans must be gender-responsive and embrace the multifaceted nature of community building. Sustainable urban planning is an act of compassion so that all citizens can live a decent quality of life and contribute to shared prosperity and social stability without harming the environment. Efforts like [Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces](#) demonstrate how participatory, human rights-based approaches both reduce discrimination and violence towards women and girls and increase their access to economic opportunities.

11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES



1.6

BILLION  
PEOPLE  
GLOBALLY  
LIVE IN  
SLUMS

9 IN 10

PEOPLE LIVING  
IN URBAN  
AREAS  
BREATHE AIR  
THAT DOES NOT  
MEET WHO AIR  
QUALITY  
STANDARDS

70%

OF GLOBAL  
CARBON  
EMISSIONS  
ARE PRODUCED  
BY CITIES



“THE GREATNESS OF A  
COMMUNITY IS MOST  
ACCURATELY MEASURED BY  
THE COMPASSIONATE  
ACTIONS OF ITS MEMBERS.”

- CORETTA SCOTT KING

## ENSURE SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION PATTERNS

Unsustainable consumption and production are driving the "big three" planetary crises: climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution.

### NOTICING

The rate at which humans are extracting and processing the Earth's natural resources is outpacing both population and economic growth. This contributes to about half of total global greenhouse gas emissions and more than 90% of biodiversity loss and water stress. The environmental consequences further reduce the quality and quantity of natural resources available.

### INTERPRETING/EMPATHIZING

Current extraction and production processes contributes to a linear "take, make, waste" economy that allows systems of exploitation to prosper, sheltered from view. The environmental impacts of unsustainable consumption and production also threaten livelihoods and food security, drive conflict and war, and harm human health. The world's poorest people, who are most directly dependent on natural resources for their livelihoods, have the least means and support to cope with the environmental consequences, which worsens inequality.

### TAKING ACTION

Compassionate frameworks can help make visible again the interconnectedness with one another and with the natural world. We need to respect the biophysical boundaries of the planet and move from linear to circular consumption patterns through a combination of extended product life cycles; intelligent product design; and reuse, recycling, and remanufacturing. With the right resource efficiency and sustainable consumption and production policies in place, global resource use can slow significantly and waste can be reduced while still accelerating global economic growth—especially for LMICs.

12 RESPONSIBLE  
CONSUMPTION  
AND PRODUCTION



17%

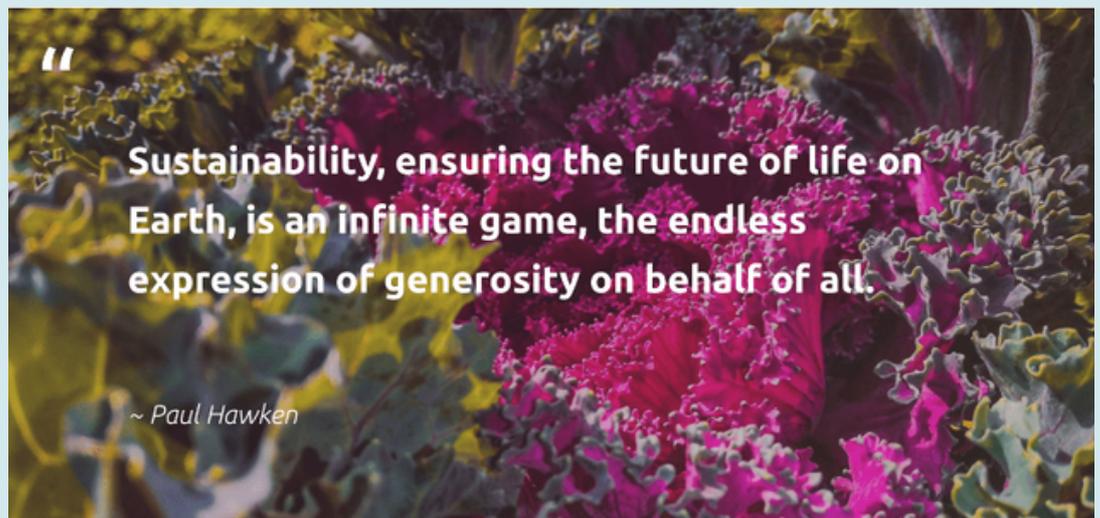
OF THE  
WORLD'S FOOD  
IS WASTED AT  
THE CONSUMER  
LEVEL

2 BILLION

METRIC TONS OF  
WASTE ARE  
GENERATED  
GLOBALLY  
EVERY YEAR.  
ONE-THIRD IS  
NOT MANAGED  
IN AN  
ENVIRONMENTALLY  
SAFE MANNER.

98%

OF SINGLE-USE  
PLASTIC  
PRODUCTS ARE  
MADE FROM  
FOSSIL FUELS



13 CLIMATE  
ACTION



1.04° C

DEGREES  
SURFACE  
TEMPERATURE  
HAS RISEN SINCE  
PRE-INDUSTRIAL  
TIMES

9.4%

OF ALL DEATHS  
GLOBALLY  
CAUSED BY  
EXTREME  
WEATHER FROM  
2000-2019

414.72

PARTS PER  
MILLION  
GLOBAL  
AVERAGE  
CARBON  
DIOXIDE: A  
NEW RECORD  
HIGH IN 2021

## TAKE URGENT ACTION TO COMBAT CLIMATE CHANGE AND ITS IMPACTS

Climate change is the single biggest threat facing humanity.

### NOTICING

Greenhouse gas emissions resulting from human activities are changing the world's climate. The previous decade was the hottest on record. More than 1.3 billion people were seriously affected by extreme weather events, such as droughts, floods, heat waves, wildfires, super typhoons, and more, which are occurring with increasing frequency and intensity. This poses substantial risks to food production, water supplies, ecosystems, energy security, and infrastructure.

### INTERPRETING/EMPATHIZING

People whose health and well-being are being harmed the most by the climate crisis are those who contribute least to its causes—people in low-income and disadvantaged countries and communities. They are also least equipped to deal with them. The climate crisis threatens to undo the last 50 years of progress in development, global health, and poverty reduction, and to widen existing inequalities within and between populations.

### TAKING ACTION

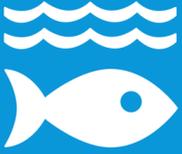
Compassionate processes are essential to change our relationship with the Earth. Compassion asks us to examine human relationships, widen circles of concern, increase institutional capacities for care, and to view ourselves as the future ancestors of humanity. Collective systemic action catalyzed by innovation in technology, finance, institutional design, novel partnerships, and international cooperation is essential to avoid reaching irreversible tipping points. Investments required to decarbonize economies can be seen as an opportunity to bring long-term benefits beyond the impact on climate, such as creating tens of millions of jobs, healthier populations, cleaner air, and greater biodiversity on land and in the oceans.



“  
ONCE WE START TO ACT, HOPE IS  
EVERYWHERE. SO INSTEAD OF  
LOOKING FOR HOPE - LOOK FOR  
ACTION. THEN AND ONLY THEN,  
HOPE WILL COME.

-Greta Thunberg

14 LIFE  
BELOW WATER



1/4

GLOBAL CO2  
EMISSIONS  
ABSORBED BY  
THE OCEAN  
ANNUALLY,  
THREATENING  
MARINE LIFE

17

MILLION  
METRIC TONS  
OF PLASTIC  
ENTERED THE  
OCEAN IN  
2021

80%

OF THE WORLD'S  
FISHERIES ARE  
FULLY  
EXPLOITED,  
DEPLETED, OR  
COLLAPSED

## CONSERVE AND SUSTAINABLY USE THE OCEANS, SEAS AND MARINE RESOURCES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The ocean is the planet's largest ecosystem—and it's endangered.

### NOTICING

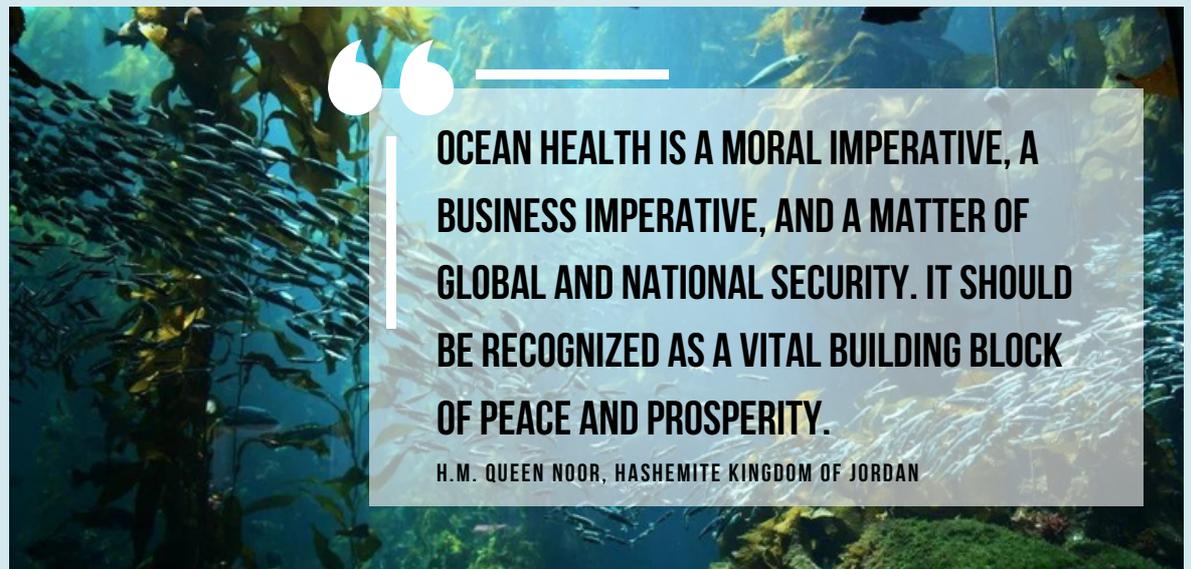
Increased acidification, eutrophication, and plastic pollution are destroying marine and coastal ecosystems. Ocean temperatures are at record high levels, which threaten this rich ecosystem and kill coral reefs. Illegal and unregulated fishing put additional pressure on global fish stocks, which provides 17% of the world's animal protein. Marine microplastics enter the human food chain, possibly causing cancer and other serious health problems.

### INTERPRETING/EMPATHIZING

Compassion not only emphasizes the relatedness of human beings, it also extends to the non-human, placing us in relationship with the larger global ecosystem. The oceans drive global systems that make the Earth habitable for humankind. Their destabilization threatens the livelihoods of over 3 billion people, including fishing and tourism. It also threatens marine biodiversity, which offers great promise for pharmaceuticals and other scientific discovery.

### TAKING ACTION

A compassionate response prioritizes the development of a sustainable ocean economy to stabilize our planet's life support system. This can be achieved through increased international cooperation and effective and equitable management of marine-protected areas. Furthermore, regulations are needed to reduce overfishing, marine pollution, and acidification. [Cascadia Seaweed](#) provides an innovative example of improving ocean health through regenerative aquaculture that increases the resilience of coastal economies and global food systems.



OCEAN HEALTH IS A MORAL IMPERATIVE, A BUSINESS IMPERATIVE, AND A MATTER OF GLOBAL AND NATIONAL SECURITY. IT SHOULD BE RECOGNIZED AS A VITAL BUILDING BLOCK OF PEACE AND PROSPERITY.

H.M. QUEEN NOOR, HASHEMITE KINGDOM OF JORDAN

15 LIFE ON LAND



3.2

BILLION PEOPLE  
NEGATIVELY  
AFFECTED BY  
LAND  
DEGRADATION &  
DESERTIFICATION

90%

OF GLOBAL  
DEFORESTATION  
IS DUE TO  
AGRICULTURAL  
EXPANSION

1

MILLION  
SPECIES ARE  
AT RISK FOR  
EXTINCTION  
WITHIN  
DECADES

## PROTECT, RESTORE & PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE USE OF TERRESTRIAL ECOSYSTEMS, SUSTAINABLY MANAGE FORESTS, COMBAT DESERTIFICATION, AND HALT & REVERSE LAND DEGRADATION AND HALT BIODIVERSITY LOSS

### NOTICING

Current biodiversity loss is 1,000 to 10,000 times higher than the natural extinction rate, and humans are almost entirely responsible. Every year we lose 13 million hectares of forest, primarily due to industrial agriculture; forests are home to more than 80% of all land-based species and provide livelihoods for 1.6 billion people. Land degradation, desertification, and loss of ecosystems increase greenhouse gas emissions and reduce fresh water availability.

### INTERPRETING/EMPATHIZING

Humans are using 25% more natural resources than the planet can sustain. Compassion helps us realize that to relieve suffering for all sentient beings, we must only use enough resources to sustain ourselves. It also helps us cultivate gratitude for the ecosystem services we receive from the natural world, from air and water purification, to soil generation, to climate stabilization, to food security, to medicines. When we destroy Earth's resources and the biodiversity that sustains us, we inflict harm on ourselves.

### TAKING ACTION

Compassion provides the motivation and understanding to end land exploitation so that we may promote human health and ensure human flourishing. Multi-stakeholder alliances must support inclusive governance approaches that promote a balance between conservation and sustainable development. For example, the [Climate-Smart Villages](#) program demonstrates how smallholder farmers can adapt their agricultural practices to secure dependable food supplies while also decreasing CO2 emissions and increasing carbon sequestration.



**PROTECTING BIODIVERSITY  
AMOUNTS TO PROTECTING  
HUMANITY.**

AUDREY AZOULAY,  
UNESCO DIRECTOR-GENERAL

16 PEACE, JUSTICE  
AND STRONG  
INSTITUTIONS



ONLY

21%

OF GOVERNMENT  
MINISTERS ARE  
WOMEN

1

CHILD DIES  
EVERY  
5 MINUTES  
AS A RESULT  
OF VIOLENCE

25%

OF THE GLOBAL  
POPULATION  
LIVES IN  
CONFLICT-  
AFFECTED  
COUNTRIES

## PROMOTE PEACEFUL & INCLUSIVE SOCIETIES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, PROVIDE ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR ALL AND BUILD EFFECTIVE, ACCOUNTABLE & INCLUSIVE INSTITUTIONS AT ALL LEVELS

### NOTICING

The world is experiencing the highest number of violent conflicts since 1945, forcibly displacing 89.3 million people by the end of 2021. Globally, 50% of children and 1 in 3 women have been subjected to physical and/or sexual violence. Although government representation is becoming younger and more gender-diverse, at the current rate, gender equality in the highest positions of power will not be reached for 130 years. One in 6 businesses pay bribes to public officials.

### INTERPRETING/EMPATHIZING

Trust is essential to peaceful societies and effective, inclusive social institutions. But individual and structural bias, prejudice, racism, and discrimination impedes trust between people and institutions. Persons who belong to marginalized social/ethnic groups or who identify as certain sexual orientations/gender identities are at greater risk of suffering violence or being trafficked. Violence causes serious and long-term physical, mental, and behavioral consequences, which ultimately undermine the social and economic development of communities and nations. Compassion is fundamental to achieving SDG16 and the realization of all other SDGs.

### TAKING ACTION

SDG16 requires radical commitment to the principle of common humanity in order to connect structures of power and the people they are supposed to serve. Gender equality and women's empowerment are powerful pathways for preventing conflict, and sustaining peace. So too are governments that promote transparency, participatory, inclusive, and accountable governance—as exemplified by the [Open Government Partnership](#), which is co-creating reforms with 78 countries, hundreds of local governments, and thousands of civil society participants.

“

WHEN WE LABEL PEOPLE AS VULNERABLE, DEFICIENT, OR PROBLEMATIC, WE DEFINE THEM OUT OF COMMUNITY AND REDEFINE THEM, NOT AS FRIEND AND AS NEIGHBOR, BUT AS CLIENT IN A SERVICE SYSTEM. WHEN WE DO THAT, WE TAKE SOME OF THE SOUL AWAY FROM THE PERSON, ALL IN THE NAME OF HELPING THEM.

CORMAC RUSSELL,  
MANAGING DIRECTOR, NURTURE DEVELOPMENT

17 PARTNERSHIPS  
FOR THE GOALS



ONLY

5

DONOR  
COUNTRIES  
MEET THEIR  
COMMITMENT  
FOR OFFICIAL  
DEVELOPMENT  
ASSISTANCE TO  
DEVELOPING  
COUNTRIES

0.9%

SHARE OF  
GLOBAL  
EXPORTS FROM  
LEAST  
DEVELOPED  
COUNTRIES

## STRENGTHEN THE MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION AND REVITALIZE THE GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Successful partnerships rooted in strong human relationships are the engine to achieve all other SDGs.

### NOTICING

To achieve the SDGs, partnerships are necessary between governments, private sector, civil society, and other parties, including a range of financial and technical support between developed and developing countries. Yet official development assistance remains less than half the UN target and debt relief for LMICs remains low.

### INTERPRETING/EMPATHIZING

The value of compassion is exemplified in SDG17. Spreading awareness of our global interconnectedness has great potential to accelerate human progress, to bridge the digital divide, and to develop knowledge societies. Finance, fair and equitable trade, technology, capacities, partnerships, and data are among the primary tools for achieving all other dimensions of sustainable development. Partnerships hindered by postcolonial legacies and inequitable power dynamics need compassion to realize the global-level action necessary to achieve all SDGs.

### TAKING ACTION

SDG17 is about more than coordinating policies to help developing countries achieve sustainable growth and development. We must nurture and sustain strong human relationships for successful partnerships. Compassion-driven partnerships provide the strongest and most equitable and inclusive systems, services, and communities for humanity. We must make space to facilitate courageous conversations about both suffering and flourishing, and embrace—not avoid—complexity and conflict. Such a social architecture is the engine to achieve all other goals.



**“Compassion  
is the glue  
that holds the  
sustainable  
goals together.”**

— Professor Liz Grant  
Global Health Academy, University of Edinburgh

# COMPASSION IN ACTION: CASE STUDY CHILE'S VALHALLA PROJECT



San Marcos is a small fishing village of around 300 people in northern Chile, near the Atacama desert. The town is located at the foot of a coastal cliff, with the sea on one side and the scorching desert above. Town residents primarily depend on the sea for their livelihoods. In 2012, the Chilean energy company, Valhalla, recognized that the unique geography surrounding the town could be used to generate and store clean energy using photovoltaic and hydroelectric technologies.

But the San Marcos community was initially hesitant and skeptical, concerned how the technology might affect their livelihoods. Instead of discrediting these concerns and steamrolling ahead, Valhalla spent the first 18 months of the project listening, building trust, educating, and negotiating meaningful partnership agreements. These compassionate design principles simultaneously enabled the project to address global challenges while meeting local needs.



“I hope that other communities can have access to the same opportunity as us, to make decisions for themselves with equal resources, to stay informed, to defend their rights, and to prevent ignorance from becoming an obstacle to development.”

LOCAL COMMUNITIES ARE OFTEN DISPLACED, POORLY REIMBURSED, OR EXCLUDED FROM THE BROADER SUSTAINABLE AND ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF MANY CLEAN ENERGY PROJECTS. THE VALHALLA PROJECT IS A BLUEPRINT FOR PARTNERSHIP AND SOCIAL INTEGRATION ROOTED IN COMPASSION THAT ALLOWS COMMUNITY MEMBERS TO HAVE OWNERSHIP AND TO BE SEEN AND HEARD ON THEIR OWN TERMS, WHILE CAPITALIZING ON EXTERNAL TECHNICAL EXPERTISE. THIS COLLECTIVE ACTION ADDRESSED SEVERAL SDGS CONCURRENTLY.



## NOTICING

Energy consumption is the biggest source of human-caused greenhouse gas emissions, responsible for 75.6% worldwide—a major threat to health, well-being, and livelihoods. Solar energy is one of the cheapest sources of renewable energy, and the Atacama Desert in northern Chile is one of the most conductive areas in the world to generate it. But challenges remain in storing this energy for continuous supply, particularly at night when demand peaks.



## INTERPRETING

Nearly 75% of the SDG targets require energy to be achieved. We need accelerated action on modern renewable energy, but the beneficiaries of large-scale energy projects are usually in wealthier urban areas, while poor, rural communities are exploited or left behind. Valhalla's metrics for success are not only determined by the outcome, but also in how their projects are developed. They embrace the wisdom, knowledge, and concerns of local communities, firmly believing they help improve the project. "The idea is that the community in San Marcos and Valhalla will be associated with one another throughout the entire life of the project."



## FEELING EMPATHY

San Marcos residents were initially skeptical about the project. They cared deeply about how it might affect the local marine life upon which they rely for their livelihoods. Valhalla team members came to live in San Marcos to build relationships, and they hosted numerous community discussions where residents could voice their fears and opinions. After backlash from one of the town's unions who felt their voices were not being heard, a community advocacy organization, Casa de la Paz, became engaged to represent community interests. The impact was felt very quickly, and community engagement increased.

In order to further ensure equitable engagement, the Valhalla team hired a Marine Consultant to provide objective technical analysis to the community and a lawyer to represent the town's residents and unions and negotiate fair agreements. Over 18 months, these efforts contributed greatly to the trust and respectful relationships that developed between the two groups.



## TAKING ACTION

Valhalla's [innovative solution](#) uses solar power to pump seawater into a reservoir behind the coastal cliff. At night when solar energy isn't available, water falls back down the cliff, generating hydro-electricity. While initial discussions with the community focused on environmental impacts, they later discussions examined longterm benefits. The community negotiated development funds with Valhalla and opened an adult high school degree program with training workshops and a business start-up centre. Business start-up funds were distributed to the community and investment in a seawater desalination plant.

# COMPASSION IN ACTION: CASE STUDY ASILI SOCIAL ENTERPRISE



Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has been plagued for decades by insecurity, poverty, and poor health outcomes. Humanitarian aid has become a fixture in the local economy, particularly for essential services, like water and healthcare. Many parts of this region are stable enough for economic investment in long-term development. But continuous humanitarian aid can perpetuate vicious cycles of dependency and rob Congolese of the opportunity to design and manage sustainable solutions for themselves.

[Asili](#) is a Congolese social enterprise that flips the script. It reinvents humanitarian aid as startup capital for self-sustaining businesses, designed and operated by and for the people that need them. Founded on the belief that everyone, no matter how poor, deserves the dignity of choosing to pay for quality, Asili's clean water points and world-class health facilities now serve 120,000 people daily at genuinely affordable prices.



*“Our neighborhood never had clean water or a health clinic that could give us quality medicines and treatments. Since Asili arrived, things have changed. We drink Asili water, which has helped our lives. And the clinic actually heals us. Asili doesn't discriminate—it's one of the reasons I chose this clinic.”*

**PEOPLE IN FRAGILE CONTEXTS ARE OFTEN TREATED AS PASSIVE BENEFICIARIES INSTEAD OF DISCERNING CUSTOMERS. ROOTED IN COMPASSION AND DIGNITY, ASILI DEMONSTRATES THE POWER OF CENTERING HUMANS IN THE DESIGN AND DELIVERY OF ESSENTIAL SERVICES. ITS INNOVATIVE, INTEGRATED SERVICE PLATFORM WORKS SYNERGISTICALLY TO BOTH PREVENT AND TREAT ILLNESSES—AND SHOWS COMMUNITIES THEY ARE VALUED BY INVESTING IN THEIR WELL-BEING AND LONG-TERM ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.**



## NOTICING

DRC ranks 175 out of 189 countries on the 2020 Human Development Index. Eastern Congo, in particular, is characterized by cycles of conflict, faltering infrastructure, market disruptions, poverty, gender-based violence, food insecurity, and more.

Despite tens of billions in foreign aid delivered to the country since the turn of the millennium, it's still hard to find clean water and health facilities are still understaffed and regularly run out of medicine.



## INTERPRETING

Despite the complexity of the Congolese context, perpetual humanitarian aid in regions and sectors that are no longer in a state of emergency only adds to the complexity. Sustainable, long-term development is necessary to break the cycles of poverty and conflict, which is only possible by disrupting international aid dependency—both economically and in terms of mindset. Asili, a project of Eastern Congo Initiative, believes that supporting Congolese-led organizations as they develop and implement Congolese-developed solutions is the most effective way of moving the country forward on a path of progress.



## FEELING EMPATHY

The community was involved in every aspect of creating Asili. Co-design sessions with Alight, an international humanitarian organization, and Ideo.org, a nonprofit design studio, uncovered their desires and ideas for everything from the service structure to the clinic layout to the logo. By inserting community members directly into the design process itself, the team grasped so much more than it could have by simply interviewing them. They learned about social dynamics, how power should be balanced in the community, and how a service that treats people like consumers might have a chance at sustainability.

"Human-centered design allowed us to build with the community at the center," said Abraham Leno, executive director of Eastern Congo Initiative. A former refugee himself, Leno explains, "Global society has not always been able to see things through our eyes. Most times when someone is categorized as helpless, it takes away a lot of power from you. That needs to change. Here your opinion matters."



## TAKING ACTION

Since its launch in 2014, Asili now has a network of co-located water points and health clinics that offer world-class quality in six "zones" that serve 120,000 Congolese customers per day. Within five years, the first water kiosks were operating profitably. Furthermore, Asili is entirely led and run by Congolese, from the director to the healthcare providers to the operations team, embedding long-term trust, sustainability, and future innovation in the community. And all the water points are run by women who live in the communities, elevating their status and generating family income.