

CITIES CAN B  
CIUDADES + B

# HOW TO ACHIEVE THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

EXTREME COLLABORATION NOTEBOOKS



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A collaborative work with the teams of  
SISTEMA B Y GULLIVER





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Pedro also edited the book “Open Ecosystems: Six strategies to accelerate the flourishing of entrepreneurship and innovation”, a notebook on how to accelerate the growth of innovation ecosystems.

## NOTEBOOK 1:

# HOW TO ACHIEVE THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

## EXTREME COLLABORATION NOTEBOOKS

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**BMW Foundation**  
Herbert Quandt



**CITIES CAN B**  
CIUDADES + B



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

These notebooks are field notes of what we have been learning in this wonderful adventure called Cities CAN B, co lead by Sistema B and Gulliver with the strategic and fundamental support of BMW Foundation.

These notes reflect the privilege of having been able to participate in the creation and flourishing of the different Cities CAN B, at a time when humanity is experiencing the beginning of a new era. Such a privilege has given us the ability to think about the new ways humanity is organizing to bring about the changes we so desperately need. These insights were collectively weaved. It took place through open conversations and initiatives carried out together with many actors from different walks of life.

Therefore, we would like to thank our partners, allies and friends from Latin America, the United States and Europe who taught us from their own experience and field work, with special thanks to the Sistema B teams in each of the countries, B Lab, B Lab Europe, Ouishare, Colaboramerica, BMW Foundation, Boma Global, and 3xi.

To all of those who fiercely and passionately fought for their cities long before our movement even existed. These notebooks were not created from scratch, there are thousands of colleagues from Latin America and around the world who have dedicated their talent and vocation to make the world more innovative, more entrepreneurial, more supportive, more equitable, more integrated with nature, more participatory, more collaborative and, above all, more sustainable.

We imagine and appreciate the work of so many actors from foundations, entrepreneurs, social innovators, community leaders, educational institutions, policy makers, public agents and multilateral organizations that have allowed us to be where we are today. Thank you for what was built and for allowing us to contribute. We would also like to thank the close team that has given life to

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To all of those who participated in the crowdfunding campaign that made these notebooks possible, 153 people from 22 countries in 4 continents, who supported us and financed part of the costs of producing them.

Finally, we would like to show our deep appreciation for Pedro Verdugo who managed to capture in words each one of the learning that we want to register in these notebooks; and Alejandro Balbontín, for putting his genius at the service of illustrating our reflections.



## PERSONAL ACKNOWLEDGMENTS TOMÁS

I firmly believe in this quote attributed to Benjamin Franklin: "Tell me and I forget, teach me and I may remember, involve me and I learn".

Everything captured in these notebooks reflect a great adventure of collective learning. Learning from the inside out and from the outside in. In each step I take being present, more awareness; with each deep breath, more presence.

There are experiences in life that change you deeply. They shape your path. The ones that have transformed me the most occurred within a community, in numerous deep conversations in three organizations to whom I am extremely grateful: Schumacher College, Sistema B, and Quishare.

I am infinitely grateful to my friends who make their life and work a force for positive transformation. Colleagues from many countries who understand that the system we live in does not work, and that changing it will be the result of our actions and our way of living, coexisting and working. Due to this awareness we choose to do what we do, the way we do it.

Thank you for embracing me in your learning journeys: Pedro Tarak, Jota Larenas, Gabi Valente, Marcel Fukayama, Ana Sarkovas, Luisa Santiago, Julia Maggion, Alda Marina, Paula Quintas, Florencia Estrade, Luciana Nery, Flowi Güenzani, Gonzalo Muñoz, Pancho Murray, Sandra Ortiz, Felipe Contreras Haye, Leonardo Maldonado, Rodrigo Mobarec, Ramsés, Nony, María Jose, Giselle Della Mea, Negro Navarro, Víctor Mochkofsky, Francine Lemos, Dani Weinmann, Dani Lerario, Mari Ostermann, Bruno Temer, Bernardo Ferracioli, Manuela Yamada, Lito, Antonin, and Taís Martins, among so many others.

Thank you, Mom and Dad, for life, the greatest gift. This book is dedicated to my first and newborn son, Lui Martins de Lara. I hope that one day I can teach you as much as you are teaching me.

I end my words quoting someone who inspires me:

*"Our true home is in the present moment. To live in the present moment is a miracle. The miracle is not to walk on water. The miracle is to walk on the green Earth in the present moment."*

Thich Nhat Hanh



TOMÁS DE LARA

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The adventure reflected in these notebooks would not be possible without Tomás de Lara, Juan Pablo Larenas, Josefa Monge, Marcel Fukayama, Sandra Ortiz, Markus Hipp, Cristina Umani, Rodrigo Mobarec and Felipe Contreras-Haye. Without your support and infinite commitment, Cities CAN B would not exist and the thousands of people who have mobilized in Mendoza, Rio de Janeiro, Santiago, Asunción and Edinburgh would not have found a space to build together a movement of more prosperous, inclusive and sustainable cities.

These notes reflect what was learned by a gigantic network of people, movements and institutions to whom I am deeply grateful, for their generosity and dedication. Personally, I would like to thank some people, by name.

Rafael Panteón, my adoptive brother, for having guided my path for the last 30 years with his mentoring and friendship. Thank you for so many years of support, advice, and wisdom. Two wise men who inspired much of what we have written here: Thich Nhat Hanh, for allowing me to reflect on life, compassion, and interdependence; and Fernando Flores, for his generosity in teaching, his intellectual sharpness, and for allowing me to understand the fundamental role that entrepreneurship and innovation have in human dignity. Two great masters of "Extreme Collaboration": Alfredo Zamudio and Adam Kahane, who have taught us how to cultivate spaces for dialogue and build bridges where there are none.

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Pedro Verdugo, without whom all our learning would have remained as eternal conversations and would never have found their place on these pages; and to Alejandro Balbontin that as always has brought art and beauty to these pages.

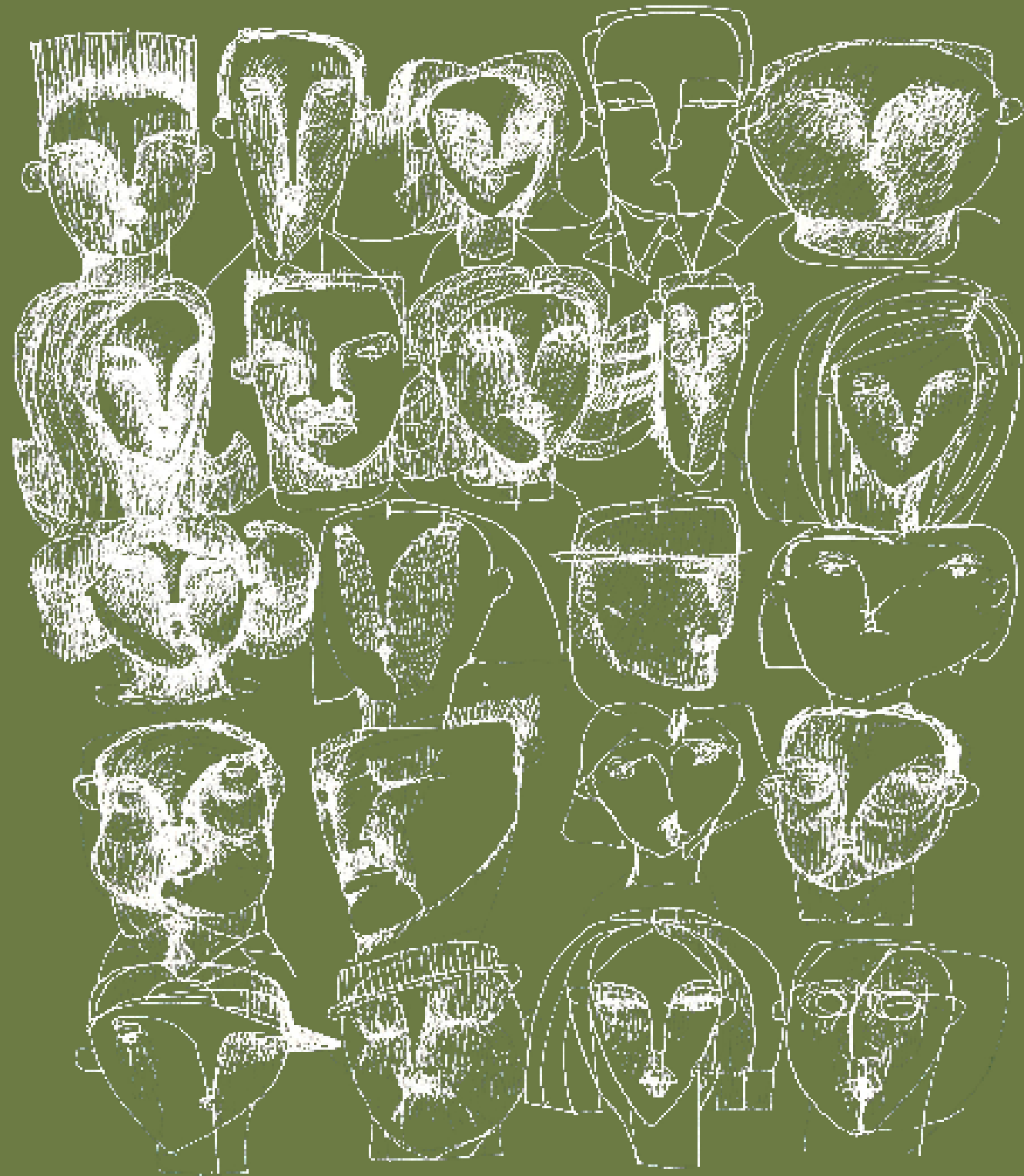
To Felipe Contreras Haye, who behind the scenes always champions our endeavors with a tireless energy, and makes possible through thick and thin everything that we dream together.

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Infinite thanks, it has been a privilege embarking on this shared adventure with you.



LEONARDO MALDONADO



WHY WE CREATED  
THE EXTREME COLLABORATION  
NOTEBOOKS?



As we write this text, a global pandemic is turning humanity upside down.

Since the beginning of the 21st century, there has been a growing understanding that changes are bewildering, and that the world is becoming unpredictable. It has become commonplace to talk about exponential changes and the way in which technology is invading our lives, as never before.

The pandemic exacerbated that feeling, stripping from millions of people the ability to see their own future with serenity. COVID-19 became a direct threat to our health and our lives, collapsing the health systems of almost every country and killing millions of people. It has also damaged our economies and put entire global industries at risk. Tourism is perhaps the most notorious example. It destroyed millions of jobs and in many cases deepened the gaps that leave marginalized people "outside" our societies.

Furthermore, activities that could be virtualized survived and even flourished. Videoconferencing has proliferated, which has forcibly transformed the world of education, and teleworking has taken hold on a massive scale. Profound and sudden transformations emerged in industries that could perform all their work or part of it online. But how many of these jobs will endure, and what will these transformations imply? This is another source of uncertainty.

In many countries, these changes raised more questions on the leadership of their political classes. Uncertainty about health was combined with doubts about the future of our employment situation and the possible consequences that political instability could bring to our lives.

In this context, many of us have an almost instinctive impulse to seek certainties: figuring out what is happening next and how to face the most urgent problems. This quest brings the illusion of being able to recover the serenity that we have been losing and that now seems to have vanished. Every inhabitant of the world is haunted by questions such as: How do I avoid getting infected?; If I do get infected, will I survive?; Will there be enough medical care

for me and my family?; After the pandemic, will there still be work for me?; Will my children be able to continue studying?; Politically, should I believe in whom, whom should I follow, Whom should I support to make changes, and which are these changes?

There are those who, seeking that certainty, look back and find all the answers in the classic Cold War dispute: whether the all-powerful state or the omnipresent market have the solution; whether the truth is on the right or on the left. These people are certain that if their recipe were truly well followed, it would tackle all the challenges of the planet, "once and for all".

Others believe that the solution lies in imitating the strategies of a specific country: They would like their government to adopt New Zealand's pandemic policies or Finland's education policies, and so on.

In the extreme, there are those who seek certainty in global conspiracies, whether denying the pandemic, denying the consequences of the disease, defaming health policies that restrict freedom of movement, or opposing mass vaccination processes. There are not many of them, and to most of us they seem a little bit cartoonish, but the impulse that drives them is the same: seeking certainty.

**What these approaches have in common is that they insist on seeking answers to new global challenges in the past. But uncertainty is here to stay. We suspect that we need to learn to accept that we can once again cultivate serenity without regaining our certainties, which have always been mostly mere illusions anyhow.**

By taking refuge in the past, we will not find the ambition to look towards the future and create the new solutions we need. The alternative, as occurred in the Renaissance, is seeing the future as a space of entirely new opportunities, where creativity and innovation are at the core, instead of the certainty and predictability that prevailed in the 20th century's popular imagination.

As leaders of the global Cities CAN B movement, we are certain that we need to seriously review our approach to the challenges of our times, since they are radically different in size and nature from anything we faced before.

**But what seems more relevant to us is that these same changes allow us to imagine and implement today solutions that humanity could not have dreamed of, just a few years ago.**

**We can face uncertainty with serenity if we learn to leverage our efforts, collectively, thanks to the new forms of collaboration that are emerging.**

These five notebooks are notes of what we have been learning with the implementation of the different Cities CAN B and what we have been incorporating from other "sister" initiatives, which inspire us on a daily basis.



## HOW DARE YOU!

September 23, 2019, United Nations Climate Summit.

A sixteen-year-old girl takes the stage, to participate in a panel.

The moderator opens by briefly introducing her and asks her a question, "What's your message to world leaders today?"

- My message is that we'll be watching you.

Next to her, there are three other people, all of them adults. They are some of the world leaders holding the climate change conversation, but if you are not particularly acquainted with the realm of climate policy and science, you wouldn't know, and would have a hard time figuring out who they were.

The speech that took place after that spread around the world and made history, becoming one of the most controversial discourses in recent decades. Just search on YouTube the phrase "How Dare You" to find dozens of videos showing the contrast between the pink blouse and the light blue background, as well as the vulnerability of her sixteen years of living and the firm attitude of the young environmental activist Greta Thunberg.

In four minutes and fifty-four seconds, the teenager berates world leaders for their inability and indolence in facing the challenge of climate change, ignoring the signals from scientists and putting economic and political interests first. But as well as berating them, she calls them out and demand immediate action, bringing up some facts that the audience was mostly likely aware of.

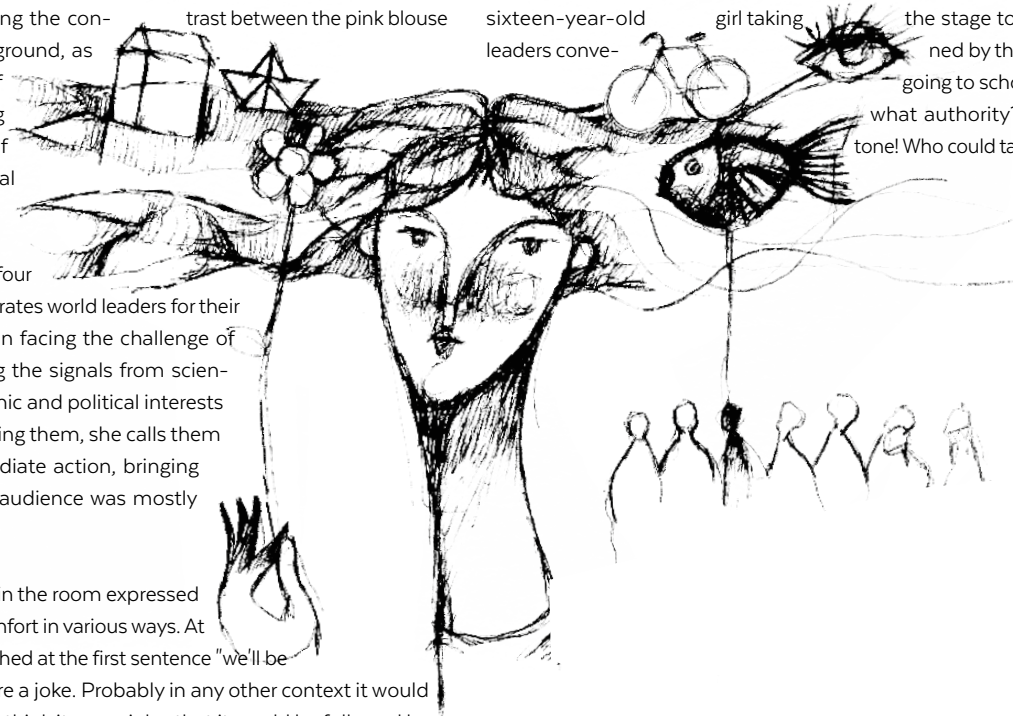
For their part, the adults in the room expressed their approval and discomfort in various ways. At first, the whole room laughed at the first sentence "we'll be watching you", as if it were a joke. Probably in any other context it would have been reasonable to think it was a joke, that it would be followed by a smile and a wink, and then the speech would follow.

But no: the smile didn't come, and neither did the wink. What came next was a declamatory speech with a voice trembling with anger and frustration, and a transgenerational rebuke: "[W]e, who have to live with the consequences (...) will never forgive you".

The speech unleashed a hurricane of reactions, both on social networks and in the mainstream press. Fox News, for example, aired a series of interviews and talk shows in which panelists fired back at Greta, some even calling her "mentally ill". Others claimed she was being manipulated by her parents and/or environmental movements. The network had to publicly apologize for doing so, a few days later.

For us, in this book, the episode is much more important than the content of the speech itself or the positions taken for or against Greta. The whole event is a token of our times and its challenges.

First of all, it is a scene that was unthinkable just ten or even five years ago. A sixteen-year-old girl taking the stage to speak to world leaders convened by the UN, instead of going to school. Really? With what authority? And with that tone! Who could take her seriously?



## WITH WHAT AUTHORITY?

Some of the voices against it angrily asserted that she lacked any sort of authority. After all, if we undertake that this is a scientific matter, then only the scientists should have a saying about it. Also, if this is a political matter, then the great leaders should be in charge. What was that girl supposed to be doing there, talking to them as if she were their teacher and they were irresponsible students? What is interesting is that, despite these arguments, somehow Greta was invited to stand there. Did the organizers know what they were doing? We suspect they did, but we also suspect that they had expected it to be some version of what we will refer to as "hacking" in these notebooks. Please remember that word, but allow us move forward a bit, before delving deeper into the term.

If you watch the video carefully, you will see the reactions of the adults in the room: at first they laugh. Before speaking, Greta is probably seen by some of them as a kind of "mascot" of the Climate Summit. Someone who had been invited to symbolically represent young people.

But as she goes on, the laughter dies down. For the first sentences, there are applause and cheering, but those sounds change as Greta's piercing sentences and emotions keep coming out. Speaking on the verge of tears, she manages to shame the entire adult generation represented there. The room seems to be divided. There are those who support her, by raising the volume of their applause; those who don't support her; and those who connect with a shy inner voice that acknowledges Greta is right, but would have preferred to ignore it. Either because it doesn't suit their interests, since they don't know what to do about it, or simply because they are convinced that this is irremediable. The young girl speaks on behalf of a generation that does not have the power to deal with climate change yet, but will have to live with its consequences. Is that true? It seems to be true, or at least that was Obama's view in 2015:

**"We are the first generation to feel the effect of climate change and the last generation who can do something about it"**<sup>1</sup>.

That phrase has become a mantra of politicians and climate change activists.

After that speech, among many other things, Greta became the youngest person to appear on the cover of Time Magazine, nominated "person of the year". But she had already been cultivating a strong media presence and a great convening capacity, which is what led her to stand on that stage in the first place.

It was on August 20, 2018 that Greta started her activist work (or, at least, it was when she made her first public appearance), at first, alone, and then, leading of a group of young people demanding the Swedish Parliament to take decisive actions against climate change, as well as making a more explicit commitment to the environment. A few weeks later, the small movement grew into a larger one, which systematized its protest actions by demonstrating every Friday under the slogan "Fridays for Future".

On March 15, 2019, the movement was already strong enough to call for an international student strike, which took place in 2000 cities around the world, mobilizing more than 1.5 million students. This strike was followed by others, reaching a peak of approximately 4 million demonstrators in 185 countries on September 20. During the same year, Greta and her movement gained the support of thousands of scientists around the world, who demonstrated by signing letters and open declarations, endorsing her. In June, Greta and Fridays for Future received the Ambassador of Conscience Award from Amnesty International.

This explains how Greta ended up at the Climate Summit, where she gave that speech.

<sup>1</sup>Speech given by then US President Barack Obama on August 3, 2015 to announce his plan to fight climate change.



## GRETA IS NOT THE ONLY ONE

Before going on, consider your own thoughts about Greta and put it on hold for a while. What follows is not a discussion about whether she is right or wrong, but about the mechanisms at work in this story, and how those mechanisms constitute our present and reshape the future.

**We call this complex phenomenon "extreme collaboration", and in this notebook we will try to illustrate what it is, examining it from different perspectives. Comparable stories, with different scopes though, are those of the Arab Spring, the Pink Shirt Day, and the #metoo movement, to name a few.**

We understand that the way in which Fridays for Future expanded its power and positioned a global discourse and an epic about the challenges of climate change was made possible due to a set of emerging phenomena. On the one hand, everything that happened around Greta reveals the growing anachronism of our current governance in political, social and economic terms, and on the other hand, explicit the resources and practices available to develop effective strategies to solve the great challenges that threaten humanity today.

In this collection, composed by 5 notebooks, we seek to share what we have learned through our work during the last 11 years, which includes the Cities CAN B project during the last 5 years, but also our previous work accelerating entrepreneurship and innovation ecosystems in 10 countries, as well as our participation in other movements such as: 3xi<sup>2</sup>, in Chile; Ouishare<sup>3</sup>, in Europe; ColaborAmerica, in Latin America; and Boma<sup>4</sup>, globally. We named the collection "Extreme Collaboration" precisely because the key to these experiences is the radical practices of collaboration we want to explore in these five notebooks.

But before moving on one thing needs to be underscored: collaboration is a trend. At this particular moment in human history, seeking collaboration seems like a magic recipe: we all claim to want to collaborate with other people, and there seems to be a growing general consensus that collaboration is the path to solving the world's biggest problems (as well as small problems in the office): global warming, poverty, and as we wrote this notebook, the COVID-19 health crisis.

The problem is that, for most of us, collaboration means coordinating efforts and pooling resources with those we agree with, know and trust.

Collaborating with those we do not know is a different ballgame: the grumpy neighbor we never greet; the person driving the car in front of us who is also stuck in the same traffic jam; the preacher or devotee of a religious organization we do not belong to; the migrant we know nothing about and who may not speak our language.

But beyond that, what seems impossible is collaborating with those we distrust, or have historically regarded as antagonistic. Those who openly have interests, preferences, beliefs or customs opposed to ours. These are people with whom we cannot collaborate. Or at least that is what we are used to think.

**That's why we call it extreme collaboration, in the same way we talk about extreme sports. Because it involves more risk, requires a higher degree of mastery, and needs to be done in a different way.**

<sup>2</sup> Available in: <https://www.3xi.cl/>

<sup>3</sup> Available in: [isponible en: https://es.ouishare.net/](https://es.ouishare.net/)

<sup>4</sup> Available in: [isponible en: https://boma.global/](https://boma.global/)

## FIVE NOTEBOOKS TO EXPLORE THE PHENOMENON

These notebooks on "Extreme Collaboration" are an attempt to collect concrete experiences of how this phenomenon occurs. Most of what is presented here was not created by us, but is the result of observing different teams around the world attempting to collaborate in radical and extreme ways, sometimes successfully and sometimes not. We had the privilege to participate in some of these experiences, and often the failures have been our own. So, in these notes, we organize those experiences, and offer you an interpretation of them, sometimes with all the bias that comes with being participating actors in the events, creating distinctions<sup>5</sup> that may help you in your own challenges. No doubt the phenomenon will evolve and, as a result, some distinctions will become obsolete, as new ones emerge. We see this notebook as a contribution to an ongoing conversation, which must be nourished by other perspectives and which will mutate over time.

We suggest, therefore, that you see these notebooks as travel notes, designed to help explore the new emerging worlds and the incredible time we live in. Therefore, that there is no objectivity possible, because in observing these phenomena we are biased by our own histories and our own intentions. The only thing we can guarantee is the sincerity of our efforts and our willingness to continue learning.

These notebooks are organized around strategies that we have repeatedly seen and that, in our view, substantially improve the likelihood of success in promoting collaboration where it seems not to be possible. We call them, evidently, "extreme collaboration strategies".

These strategies have been articulated as levers to bring about profound and massive transformations that contribute to solving the great challenges of our time. We have drawn on the seventeen United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which we believe provide the most comprehensive guidance framework available on the threats to our species, and the urgency of the deadlines for addressing them.

These notebooks do not contain diagnoses of the underlying problems behind the SDGs, nor of their progress. On the contrary, we assume that such analyses exist and have been produced by teams prepared to do so. We focus on ways to accelerate change that add to the existing efforts from public institutions and policies.

There are approximately ten years left to bring about the inflection that the world needs. We truly hope these notes contribute to getting us there in time.

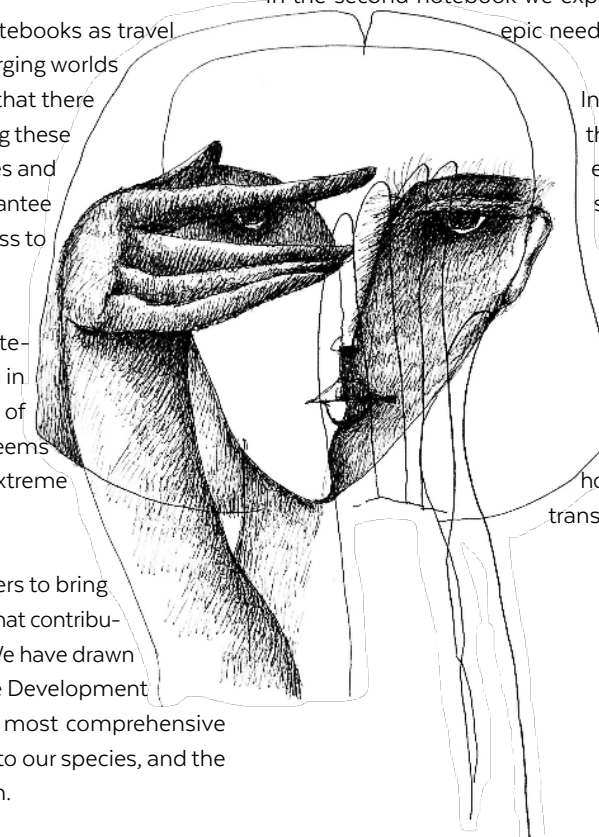
In the first notebook (this one) we will explore possible strategies for accelerating change, while raising the question on the scale at which they can be deployed.

In the second notebook we explore how to cultivate the common epic needed to drive change.

In the third notebook we will address the challenge of working with others, even those whom we have historically seen as hostile to us or to each other.

In the fourth notebook we will offer you insights on how to leverage the power of change that the private sector brings to the table.

In the fifth notebook we will look at how to help citizens lead the necessary transformations.



<sup>5</sup> By distinctions we mean: terms that allow us to distinguish things (phenomena, acts, rites) that we do not see otherwise. These are not "definitions", since we do not seek to define "the thing", but to recognize it when we see it. For example, we use the distinction "discrimination" to refer to attitudes that we generally recognize as such, but which are different from each other. Defining discrimination is very difficult, but we recognize it because we have a distinction for it.



Introduction to  
the first notebook:

**WE ARE NOT  
LIVING UP TO THE  
CHALLENGES WE  
FACE AS  
HUMANITY.**



## THE ROAD AHEAD THIS NOTEBOOK

This notebook is the first in the Extreme Collaboration Notebook collection and opens our travel notes series. Here we go!

But first a warning: this is only the beginning of the journey. And we are not just saying that because this is the first chapter of the first volume of our series of notebooks. Rather, we mean that this journey has just begun... for humanity. Extreme collaboration was made possible by the telecommunications revolution that has (potentially) connected us all, and we are learning as we go. It is key not to forget that we are not the only ones, nor the first ones. We are building on the shoulders of giants.

In the following pages we will show the limitations we believe the actual global governance has in taking on the great challenges facing humanity. That is, how the institutions, multilateral organizations and decision-making mechanisms available to coordinate us on a global and national scale don't produce the changes needed at the necessary speed. Therefore, in this notebook we will operate under the idea that it has become necessary to find a new way of orchestrating and coordinating the efforts of human beings, mobilizing the resources of our societies in pursuit of goals embodied in the SDGs.

These pages are also a beginning in another sense.

**We want to insist on this: we do not believe in any way that we have all the answers. We declare ourselves apprentices in the art of extreme collaboration.**

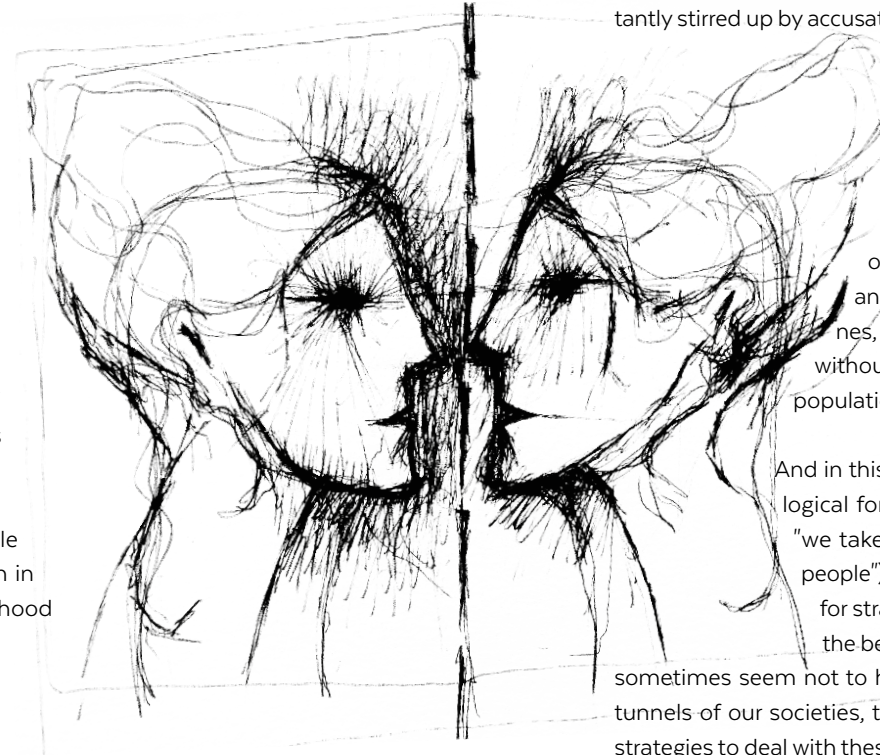
We start from the assumption that today's social phenomena are of such complexity that we renounce the temptation to try to deeply and completely understand them, especially because we are experiencing them and are a part of them. There are teams of scholars from various disciplines (philosophy, sociology, psycholo-

gy, anthropology, biology, among others) who are engaged in this work and often illuminate our way and inspire us. Some of them are mentioned in these pages.

In this first notebook we will present an overview of the cultural transformation we believe the world needs and how we can accelerate it.

In summary, in this notebook you will find:

- 1) Answers, or the first hints of some answers to the question: how and why governance systems are being "hacked" and extreme collaboration is emerging?
- 2) Experiences from different parts of the world about these trends: what has worked and what has not.
- 3) Tools to activate a "Minimum Viable Ecosystem"<sup>6</sup>, to drive transformation in a territory, ranging from a neighborhood to a city.



## THE FIRST STEP IS TO LOOK OURSELVES IN THE MIRROR

As we write this text, the COVID-19 global pandemic ravages our species. The initial catastrophes in China, Italy and Spain have been joined by those in the United States, Brazil, the United Kingdom, Mexico and France, just to name a few of the countries with the highest death tolls. At the time that we are writing these lines, the death toll has risen to more than 2,500,000; while the press and social networks are constantly stirred up by accusatory statements between governments and

opposition parties, between supporters of one strategy and supporters of another. All the citizens of the world, some more than others, have been confronted with a double uncertainty: on the one hand, illness and the possibility of dying or losing a loved one; on the other hand, the economic, social and mental health consequences of quarantines, which have left millions without work and without income, and have left a large part of the population living in stress and fear of the future.

And in this media storm, which is traversed by ideological formulas (e.g. "more state or more market", "we take care of the economy or we take care of people"), local humanitarian crises and competition for strategic resources (mechanical ventilators, at the beginning; and now, as we write, vaccines), we sometimes seem not to hear that, deep down, in the underground tunnels of our societies, there are people who collaborate and find strategies to deal with these crises. This emergent, bottom-up power, so to speak, is an important change from the top-down logic of our current governance.

COVID-19, in its first fifteen months, has placed us, as humanity, in front of an existential mirror, where we can recognize ourselves in our pains and limitations, but also in our possibilities. And what appears in this reflection? Let us venture a preliminary image. Some of us like to say that "we are in the same boat", but if we think about it, we should look for a metaphor that takes on a greater complexity. We are in the same storm, but in different boats. And that sometimes gives us the

illusion that, if our boat is better, we might survive even if the others sink, but that is not how it works. The nature of the storm is global, and we risk losing the entire fleet, unless we take care of each boat, from the great ocean liners to the modest rafts, because the fate of each and every one of us is the fate of us all, as if each small boat were chained to the others.

Put in non-metaphorical terms, the mirror shows us that:

- We have challenges as a species, global challenges that concern us all and from which no one can escape: global warming, mass migrations, the potential economic crisis, the destruction of the oceans, plastic pollution, digital privacy and the ethical challenges of genomics, to name a few.
- We have unlimited, but also unarticulated, power: our size (we have grown exponentially since the industrial revolution, from 1 billion people, in 1826; to 7.8 billion, in 2020)<sup>7</sup>, our impact on natural ecosystems, our limitless capacity to transform the environment, are a tremendous opportunity, or a tragic curse, depending on whether or not we manage to synchronize our efforts in pursuit of goals that take care of our environment and our species.
- We do not know how to operate as a species. We collaborate in small groups with which we identify, and we do not take into consideration the interests of those whom we are not able to see, who don't even exist for "us".
- We are running out of time. Estimates from the scientific community seem to agree that the point of no return will be reached within approximately ten years if we do not radically change the way we produce, consume and live<sup>8</sup>. At that point, the transformation of environmental conditions would make human life as we know it unsustainable and would affect millions of other species, with unimaginable repercussions.

<sup>6</sup> We take the concept of the "Minimum Viable Ecosystem" from the book *The Wide Lens: What Successful Innovators See That Others Miss*, 2013.

<sup>7</sup> In 1950, five years after the United Nations was created, the world's population was estimated at 2.6 billion people. It reached 5 billion, in 1987; and 6 billion, in 1999. In October 2011, the world's population was estimated at 7 billion people. To celebrate this historic event, a global movement called "A World of 7 Billion" was launched. (Data taken from the official United Nations website, under Global issues. Population. Retrieved from: <https://www.un.org/es/sections/issues-depth/population/index.html>).

<sup>8</sup> Grupo Intergubernamental de Expertos sobre el Cambio Climático. (2018). *Calentamiento global de 1,5°C. Volume in Spanish*. Available at: [https://www.ipcc.ch/site/assets/uploads/sites/2/2019/09/SR15\\_Summary\\_Volume\\_spanish.pdf](https://www.ipcc.ch/site/assets/uploads/sites/2/2019/09/SR15_Summary_Volume_spanish.pdf)

## HOW HAVE WE "ORGANIZED" OURSELVES UNTIL TODAY?

Most of the institutions we use to articulate ourselves globally were created a few years after the Second World War, seventy-five years ago: the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank (WB), the United Nations (UN), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Organization of American States (OAS), just to name a few. Although these institutions have gradually adapted as a result of milestones such as the fall of the Berlin Wall, today they find themselves completely overwhelmed when it comes to managing the global crises that beset us. They played a very important role between the 1950s and 1980s, containing the tension of the Cold War and building spaces for agreements between nations. But in this 21st century, they are not managing to advance or resolve the challenges facing humanity as a whole at the necessary speed, partly because the decision-making mechanisms do not respond to the power imbalances between stakeholders with opposing interests. These shortcomings in our governance was already expressed at the Rio Summit (1992), with the discourse that it was not possible to leave decisions on issues as important as the environment in the hands of governments alone. This gave rise to corporate social responsibility and a whole array of civic society organizations, a first glimpse of what was about to come.

As an example of these shortcomings in global governance one can mention a story that hit the European newspapers on April 1, 2021: the failure to meet all of the EU's COVID-19 vaccination targets for the first quarter of the year. We will later present more comprehensive examples when looking at the progress towards the SDGs, according to the UN's own assessments.

In our era of exponential technologies, of completely globalized markets, of massive hyper-connection – which shortens time and distance – the

architecture of power is being transformed: nation states and institutions are losing power; citizens are gaining the capacity to organize and act; and technology companies and the financial sector are concentrating power as never before.



## In this scenario, new instances and new ways of solving global problems are possible and necessary.

We have no doubt about it.

The COVID-19 pandemic has allowed us in recent months to look without self-deception at how ineffective the power of the WHO, the UN and other intergovernmental bodies has been in aligning and mobilizing the efforts of nation states towards rapid, coordinated and effective responses to a threat whose importance is no longer disputed, and which has put at hazard the health and living conditions of practically the entire humanity. It is interesting to draw a counterpoint between the status of vaccines and the control of the spread of the virus. Vaccines are a demonstration of unprecedented scientific, technological and political progress: we have developed COVID-19 vaccines in a period of time far shorter than all previous experiences of vaccine development. As a reference, the approximate time it took for other vaccines to be created was<sup>9</sup>:

- Tuberculosis: 45 years
- Typhoid fever: 133 years
- Meningitis: 92 years
- Whooping cough: 42 years
- Dengue fever: 112 years
- Polio: 47 years
- Chickenpox: 42 years
- Measles: 10 years
- Hepatitis B: 16 years
- Rotavirus infection: 33 years
- Ebola: 43 years
- HPV infection: 25 years

Other diseases, as lethal and massive as AIDS or malaria, do not have a vaccine that can be used on a mass scale yet.

In contrast, it took the scientific world only fourteen months to generate at least fifteen vaccines that have passed beyond phase 3 (the clinical trials that allow the vaccine to be distributed to the population). This is an unprecedented success.

But this great effort is articulated around a few highly organized centers of power and is, therefore, insufficient when it comes to stopping the contagion, which necessarily involves coordination and changes in habits in which literally the whole of humanity must participate. What's new is that we are now able to observe ourselves as a species facing a challenge that involves all of us at the same time. And our institutions are not designed to solve that.

On the contrary, when it comes to the distribution of resources, things are more complex. When it came to ventilators, we had to witness in the press a series of unseemly gestures by the authorities of different countries, who tried to monopolize the devices for their own citizens. Much of that tension was resolved by "every man for himself" rules. Respirators went to those who could afford them and moved the fastest.

With vaccination in Europe we seem to be witnessing the same phenomenon. At least according to the New York Times<sup>10</sup>, the flaw lies in the way the European Union approached the labs. Instead of an aggressive stance, like that of the United States, which worked in coordination with the laboratories and paid part of the development costs, Europe would have behaved as a customer waiting for the products to come to the market. This is not an ideal analogy, but the same source indicates that the American and European vaccine procurement budgets were \$10 billion and \$3.2 billion respectively. This explains why the laboratories prioritized the US. Once again, "every man for himself".

<sup>9</sup> Data taken from the article Covid-19: How much time did it take us to find the vaccine of different virus, published in BBC News World on December 11, 2020, which in turn quotes from "Our World in Data, Immunization Action Coalition".

<sup>10</sup> Where Europe went wrong in its vaccine rollout, and why, NYT, March 20, 2021. Article by Matt Apuzzo, Selam Gebrekidan and Monika Pronczuk.





I.FACING  
21ST CENTURY CHALLENGES WITH  
20TH CENTURY GOVERNANCE

## OUR GLOBAL GOVERNANCE IS NOT ENOUGH

On September 25, 2015 at the UN General Assembly, 193 countries adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which is set out in 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with 169 goals and 232 associated indicators.

Since that day, multilateral agencies, in coordination with national governments and a network of organizations including, indeed, private for-profit and non-profit organizations, have worked intensively to achieve the agenda.

Each SDG is organized into a structure of more specific targets, which determine its scope and focus. Details can be found in the official UN documentation on the SDGs<sup>11</sup>.

Countless initiatives are underway and organizations are working hard to advance gender equality. At the same time, climate change triggers thousands of initiatives and poverty eradication mobilizes thousands more. Each of the seventeen challenges has fervent advocates working tirelessly in their respective institutions.

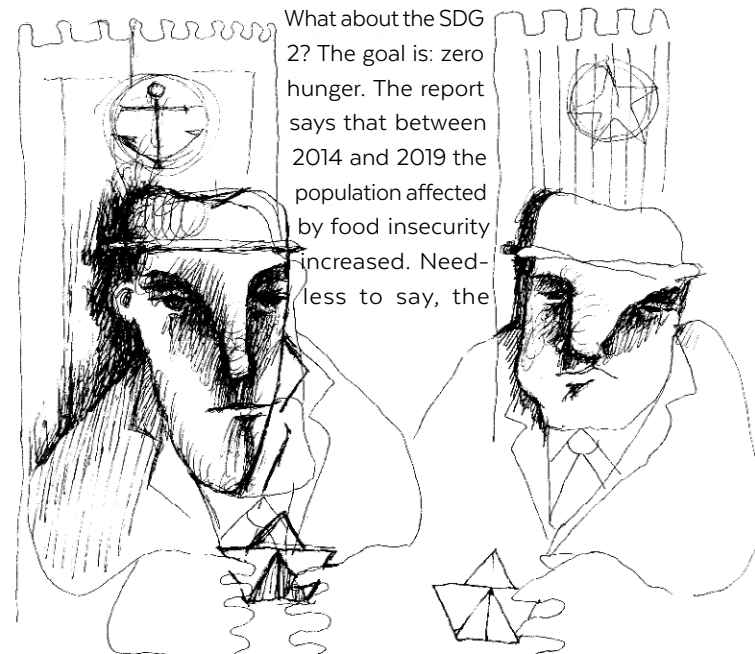
But despite the enormous efforts, the results are profoundly insufficient. Let's take a look at some of the data available in the official report on SDG progress to 2020, produced by the UN<sup>12</sup>.

Take for example SDG 1: "No poverty", which is described in more detail as "end poverty in all its forms everywhere". In the opening paragraphs of the section devoted to this goal, it states that even before the pandemic "progress towards goal 1 had slowed and the world was not on track to end extreme poverty by 2030". In ten years (between 2010 and 2019) the poverty rate was reduced by just over half, from 15.7% to 8.2%; and in the projection to 2030, before COVID, it was envisaged to reach 6% in the next ten years (using the original indicators). The same report warns that COVID-19 has caused the first increase in recent years, and that seventy-one million people have been pushed back into extreme poverty by 2020.

Of course, it would be better to have poverty indicators that re-

cognize more deeply the complexity of the problem, incorporating its multiple dimensions. But, for the time being, what matters to us here is to observe that, in the terms in which it was originally defined, this objective is not going to being met.

When we analyze these figures, including the pre-pandemic projection, one might think that these are positive results, and in a way they are. That is, a large number of people would have been lifted out of extreme poverty to live with a little more dignity and opportunities, even if they remain vulnerable. But if we think about it in terms of a person's life span, we are talking about 20 years, that is a whole generation that will not get a glimpse of that promised land. And at the end of that period we will still have 6% poverty: if the UN's own projections come true, there will be 8.5 billion people living on Earth in 2030, so that 6% represents approximately 510 million extremely poor human beings. People for whom, even after fifteen years of concerted global effort, living conditions will still be severe, and who will go through life without having experienced anything else. Isn't that disturbing?



	Objective	Projection of achievement to 2030	Description
ODS 1	No poverty	No	Even without a pandemic, 6% of the world's population would be living in extreme poverty by 2030. The pandemic worsened the situation.
ODS 2	Zero hunger	No	The % of the population facing food insecurity has increased since 2014. The pandemic has worsened the situation.
ODS 3	Good health and well-being	No	Very slow progress. The target will not be met by 2030. The pandemic has put more pressure on countries' health systems, worsening the situation.
ODS 4	Quality education	No	Before the pandemic, it was estimated that there would still be 200 million children out of school in 2030.
ODS 5	Gender quality	No	The promise of gender equality is far from being kept. COVID-19 has worsened the situation by putting more women at risk of domestic violence, curbing advancements on child marriage and genital mutilation, and increasing the gender disproportionality of unpaid domestic work, among other things.
ODS 6	Clean water and sanitation	No	There will still be billions of people without access to sanitation in 2017. This is a serious constraint on the chances of containing COVID-19. Unless rates of progress improve substantially, the 2030 target will not be met.
ODS 7	Affordable and clean energy	No	Although the world is making progress towards its sustainable energy goals, efforts do not have the scale required for them to be achieved by 2030.
ODS 8	Decent work and economic growth	No	Even before the pandemic, economic growth was nowhere near the levels needed to meet the 2030 target. In 2018-2019 it had experienced its lowest level since the 2008-2009 crisis. The coronavirus brought abrupt and profound changes, further slowing the economy.
ODS 9	Industry, innovation and infrastructure	No	"The growth of manufacturing has decelerated and industrialization in LDCs (less developed countries) is still too slow".
ODS 10	Reduced inequalities	No	Despite some positive signs, such as lower income inequality in some countries and a preferential trade situation for lower-income countries, the COVID-19 crisis is worsening inequality, affecting the most vulnerable people the most. Income inequality is declining in some countries, but overall inequality levels remain high.

<sup>11</sup> Data extracted from the official website of the United Nations. Sustainable Development Goals. Retrieved from: <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment>

<sup>12</sup> The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2020. United Nations, 2020.



	Objective	Projection of achievement to 2030	Description
ODS 11	Sustainable cities and communities	No	More than 90% of COVID-19 cases occur in urban areas. The pandemic is hitting the most vulnerable the hardest, including the world's 1 billion inhabitants of informal settlements and densely populated slums. Global progress has been reversed in reducing the proportion of slum dwellers whose vulnerability has been exacerbated by the pandemic.
ODS 12	Responsible production and consumption	No	The global ecological footprint increased between 2010 and 2017.
ODS 13	Climate action	No	The world is far from meeting the target. The climate crisis continues unchanged, as the global community moves further away from the full commitment required to reverse it. Temperatures are on track to rise by up to 3.2°C by the end of the century. To reach the maximum target of 1.5°C, or even 2°C, greenhouse gas emissions must start falling by 7.6% each year from 2020. However, despite the drastic reduction in human activity during the COVID-19 crisis, the resulting 6% drop in emissions projected for 2020 falls short of the target, and emissions are expected to increase as restrictions are lifted.
ODS 14	Life below water	Ambiguous	The drastic reduction in human activity caused by the COVID-19 crisis, while rooted in tragedy, is an opportunity for the oceans to recover. It is also an opportunity to plan a sustainable recovery path that will ensure livelihood for decades to come, in harmony with the natural environment.
ODS 15	Life on land	No	Conservation of terrestrial ecosystems is not trending towards sustainability. Forest areas continue to shrink at an alarming rate, protected areas are not concentrated in sites known for their biological diversity, and species remain threatened with extinction. Wildlife crime endangers both animal species and human health. "75% of emerging infectious diseases (...) are zoonotic - they are transmitted from wildlife to people and tends to happen when populations encroach on natural habitats and engage in activities that disrupt ecosystems, such as wildlife trafficking ". COVID-19 is an example of that.
ODS 16	Peace, justice and strong institutions	No	Conflict, insecurity, weak institutions and limited access to justice remain threats to sustainable development. The COVID-19 pandemic threatens to amplify and explode vulnerabilities around the world.
ODS 17	Partnerships for the goals	No	Support for implementing the SDGs has been steady but fragile. Financial resources remain scarce, trade tensions have been rising and crucial data is still lacking. The COVID-19 pandemic now threatens these achievements, since trade, foreign direct investment and remittances are expected to decline. The pandemic appears to be accelerating current trends of global value chain disruption. Moreover, one of the few positive effects of the pandemic, the massive adoption of internet-related technologies, is countered by a huge digital gap that leaves billions of people unaffected by this change.

pandemic is accentuating this problem.

The same goes for the other goals: we are not reaching the targets. Here is an overview of all the SDGs<sup>14</sup>:

**In other words: we are not reaching the target of any of the SDGs, despite the fact that such commitment has been made by the strongest and most global institutions we have. And that was already the case before the pandemic.**

We can assess whether we are doing the right thing, or whether we are doing it fast enough, but there seems to be no reason to think that doing the same thing with more enthusiasm will produce better results.



<sup>14</sup>Prepared by the authors based on information available in The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2020. United Nations, 2020. The texts in quotes are verbatim quotations from that document.

## FROGS DON'T, BUT WE DO

Where are we getting it wrong?

We don't have all the answers, but we have a thread. Let's put it this way:

### We are collaborating as our grandfathers and grandmothers did.

We relate to those we know, we establish relationships of loyalty that guard our small local groups of trust, we view with suspicion those who "compete" with us or adhere to different approaches or principles. We map the world by distinguishing friend from foe, ally from competitor. And we feel "at the cutting edge of collaboration" when we throw terms like "coopetition" on the table, to boast of being able to cooperate and compete at the same time. A term coined... twenty-four years ago.

Are we saying we are fools? No. Our actions are modulated by political, historical and social variables, to which we will return in a few pages. But first we want to look at two crucial aspects of how we operate as individuals.

We are not dumb, but we are apes, or nearly so. Technically speaking, we are primates. That is, originally, animals that depend on specific "social instincts", rooted in our history for hundreds of thousands of years, that make us respond more or less automatically to the risks and opportunities presented by our environment, depending on what our bodies perceive. That is, we are constitutively accustomed ("programmed" might be an acceptable term) to quickly identify and distinguish friend from foe, for example.

Moreover, if we are to believe in Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela<sup>15</sup>, then it is true that our capacity to "know" is determined by our biology.

### This means that we do not see the world as it is; who we are conditions how we see the world.

And in this phrase, "seeing" is the phenomenon of interpreting the stimuli that activate our five senses, filtering them through the interpretations that we have of the world and that we inherit, without the possibility of choosing.

You may be wondering: are we really going to talk about biology? Well, yes. Just a little. Just enough to show that global challenges exist in dimensions and on scales that our natural capacities simply do not allow us to process. And worse, that in the face of such complexity, we often end up inventing simplistic interpretations to reassure ourselves. So, instead of considering the many variables that impact the situation we find ourselves in, we cling to one of them to explain the whole phenomenon. In many countries, for example, migrants are scapegoated to explain local economic, social or political crises that have multiple roots and are often originated by a global crisis.

Think of that old story of the frog in the pot that gets used to the water temperature while it is slowly brought to a boil, so that it remains still without perceiving the danger, until it finally dies. Have you ever heard it? There must be thousands of memes and dozens of books that use that image as an example to tell us "don't numb yourself to dangers you can barely perceive". Well, it's a myth. That doesn't happen to frogs: any frog in a pot of hot water struggles and tries to escape.

But it does happen to us, humans, when it comes to the big pot of the world whose contents is threatening to boil. Let's start by accepting that the only way we connect to world problems is by extrapolating from our direct experiences and language. That is to say: if we have seen people living in extreme poverty, that does not mean that we have seen all people living in extreme poverty. We

have seen particular cases of that type of suffering, and it allows us to imagine the massive pain of millions of people who suffer from marginalization. There are countless studies, documentaries and stories that tell us about it, and that perhaps move us or bring us closer to the enormity of the problem. And then we feel that we "know" that the problem exists.

Let's think about climate change. We already know it is there. Some of us are experiencing it in the way the climate behaves in the region we live in or because we learn about what is happening elsewhere. And if we are scientists who are experts on the subject, we have a more systemic interpretation of the issue, but it is always, in any case, an intellectual construct. We cannot get in touch with the problem directly and immediately, especially when the causes and consequences are so far apart in time and space.

This basic way of relating to the environment leaves out almost everything that concerns our species or the Earth. We simply do not have the sensory experience of the planet or humankind. These things are rather abstract and only our reasoning allows us to understand these risks and put them in a frame of reference.

I, here, now, even if I understand climate change, I am not able to experience it, or rather, I experience it in so many different ways (the unseasonal rain in Santiago, the news about snowing in Texas, the video about a tornado in Alabama, etc.) that I am not able to see it as one single thing. So what we really have is a perception of climate change, derived from some direct experiences of climate phenomena and the news to which we are exposed.

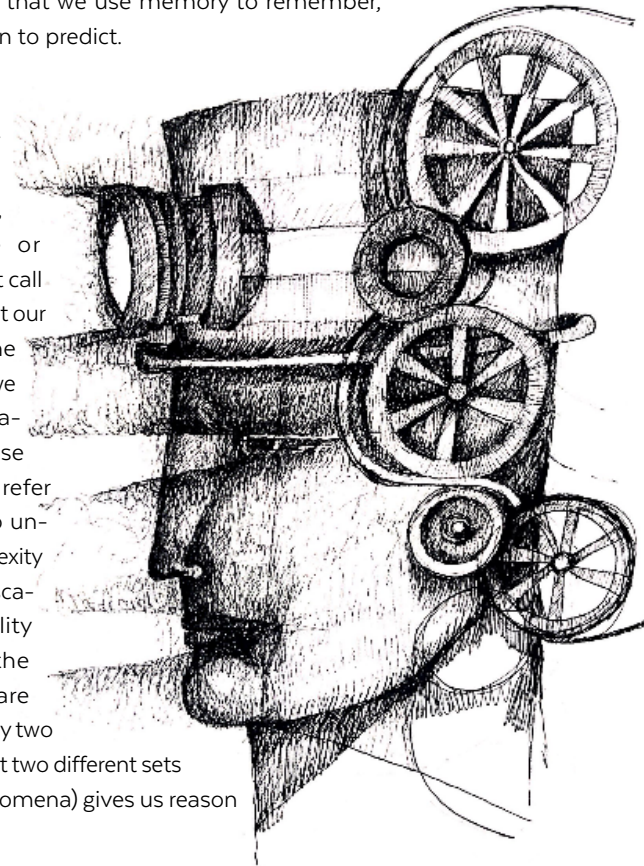
But our limitations are not only biological.

Our ability to predict changes in the future does not seem to help us either. In 2013 Jordi Quoidbach, Daniel T. Gilbert, and Timothy D. Wilson coined the phrase "the end of history illusion"<sup>16</sup> to refer to a psychological phenomenon concerning our ability to perceive the changes we will experience in the future. The study focuses on the

self-perceptions of change of around 19,000 people interviewed, and one of its most important findings is that it appears that humans tend to underestimate the changes we will experience in the future, at least in comparison to the changes we perceive ourselves to have experienced in the past.

More radically, these authors conclude that we behave as if we were living in the moment when we have finally become the beings we were meant to be. In other words, as if we did not expect things to change much in, say, the next few decades. Will the same be true of our ability to predict changes in our environment? It calls for further research, but probably yes, at least in the sense that there is no way to have "objective" perceptions of the future. The main reason is that we use memory to remember, and imagination to predict.

Yes! We know that many professionals in psychology, neuroscience or medicine might call us simplistic, but our point is that the mere fact that we use different capacities for these processes (we refer to the ability to understand complexity on a planetary scale and the ability to anticipate the future, which are surely not simply two phenomena, but two different sets of mental phenomena) gives us reason



<sup>15</sup> Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela (+2001), both biologists and philosophers, were the founders of the Escuela de Santiago (Santiago School), whose work focused on the nature of the phenomenon of "knowing", and coined the distinction "autopoiesis" as the phenomenon of self-creation that would characterize living beings. Together they wrote a series of books, among them: *De máquinas y seres vivos: Una teoría sobre la organización biológica* [Machines and Living Things. Autopoiesis, the Life Organization] (1973), *The Tree of Knowledge: The Biological Roots of Human Understanding* (1984).

<sup>16</sup> Jordi Quoidbach et al., *The End of History Illusion*. *Science* 339, 96 (2013); DOI: 10.1126/science.1229294



to believe that our perception of future changes in the world is far from accurate.

Of course, as mentioned above, there are also political, historical and social aspects. The scientific world, for example, is full of professionals who have the capacity to anticipate the future, but do not necessarily have the power to push for change. There are those who have conflicting interests and although they can see what measures are needed, they are unable or unwilling to find ways to implement them. There are those who are simply afraid: because they are politically exposed, because innovation means taking risks that can destroy their careers, and a long etcetera full of reasons that may seem incomprehensible or unacceptable to us, but are part of the human melting pot.

In short, our capacity to relate to such complexity and urgency is limited by our biology and culture. And furthermore, our old way of organizing ourselves, including the way we deal with power asymmetries, is not up to the task, because the challenges have become planetary and far more complex than we were able to see and handle a few decades ago, posing threats that come with a sense of urgency and in a speed that requires the coordinated action of millions of people at the same time, in a continued way.

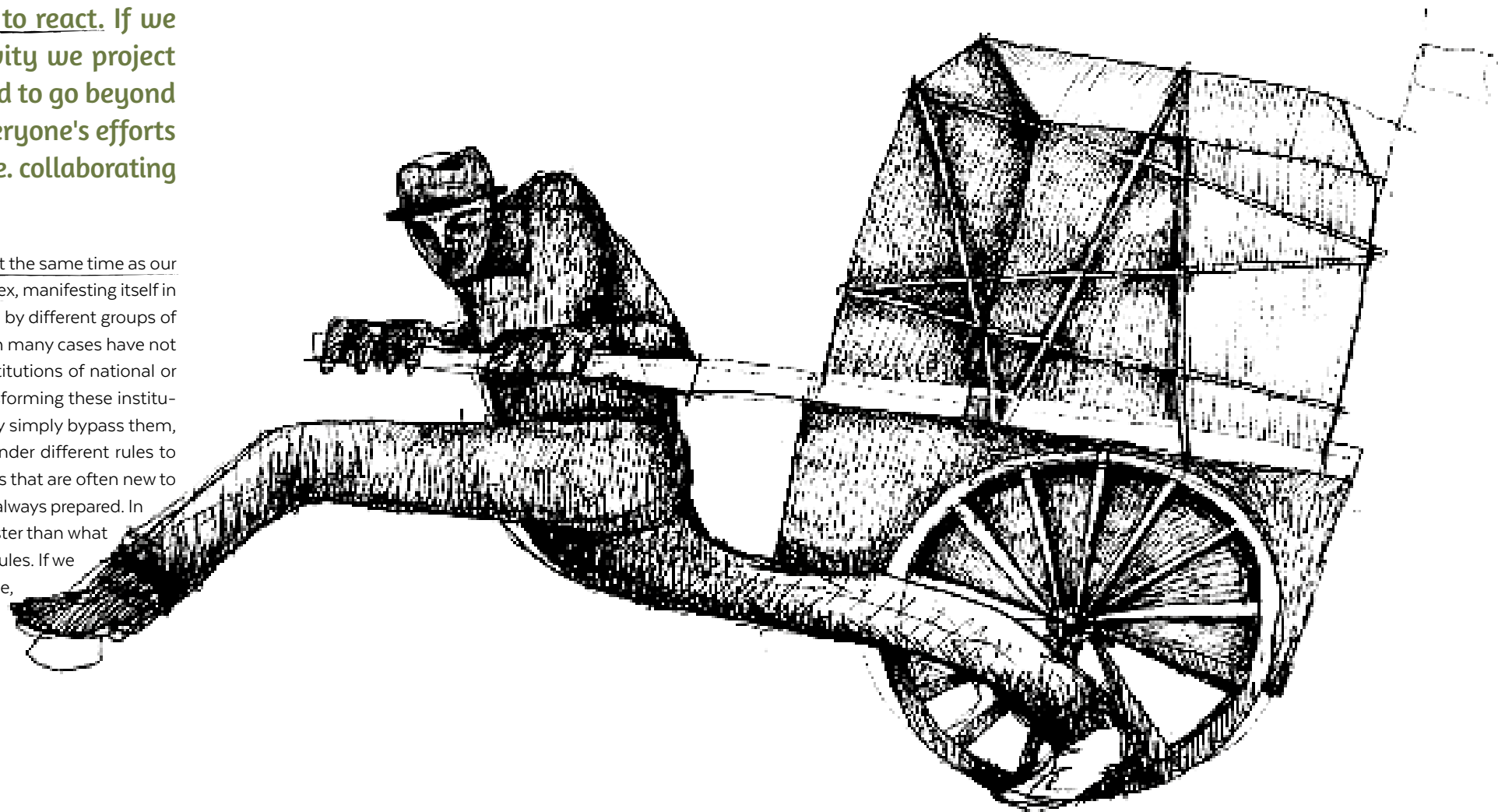
Thus, collaborating in a better way than our grandparents did means overcoming this historical way of being that we "embody" due to our biology and the environment in which we grew up. It means building a new form of collaboration, collectively. A way of collaborating that we call "extreme collaboration".

We believe this new way could be part of the solution. It allows us freedoms that our grandparents did not have, that come from technological capabilities that were not available to them, but are available to us. Technologies that allow the coordination of thousands and even millions of people in real time. It is enough to agree on the basic objectives, because there is not need for all

of us to agree upon the same work plan. And that requires institutions and strategies that allow us to operate in this way: without centralization, without hierarchy, without being closed. In other words, open and distributed.

**While we cannot change our biology, or the way our mind works, what we can change is our willingness to act collectively, rather than waiting for the institutions we inherited from the 20th century to react. If we want to abandon the passivity we project on the frog in its pot, we need to go beyond those institutions, tuning everyone's efforts towards common purposes, i.e. collaborating in an extreme way.**

Extreme collaboration has been emerging at the same time as our global challenges have become more complex, manifesting itself in different countries, in different movements, by different groups of people, for different causes. These groups in many cases have not even attempted to change the existing institutions of national or multilateral governance. Reforming or transforming these institutions is a long and complex process, so they simply bypass them, or they use shortcuts, such as operating under different rules to incorporate them into collaboration systems that are often new to these institutions and for which they are not always prepared. In doing so, they manage to go further and faster than what these organizations allow under their usual rules. If we had to give this "breaking the rules" a name, we would call it hacking.





## II. EMERGING WAYS TO ORGANIZE OURSELVES



## THE NEW (FUTURE) ORGANIZATIONS: EMPATHETIC, TRANSPARENT, FAST, AND OPEN. ARE THEY HACKING THE OLD ONES?

We have used the term hacking to refer to what those who practice extreme collaboration do.

It is a term that requires clarification, because for many people it has a negative connotation, associated with those who breach the security of computer systems, damaging or stealing information against the will of its owners. But what we want to convey is rather the mode of operation that manages to bend the rules, with the consent of the institutions themselves, to further their own objectives.

Something similar to what the computer expert does when you bring them your notebook that is running too slow: they make some rules more flexible, skip others, and that allows them to change the settings and improve the machine's performance by, for example, temporarily disabling the antivirus to be able to modify or reinstall secure programs.

If extreme collaboration is this hacking, i.e. a change from the old ways of collaborating that relaxes the usual rules, then we need to learn to distrust our old ways, which are crumbling under the weight of history and the increasing demands on our governance:

- Our old way of relating to our environment based on direct experience, which is not sufficient to deal with the complexity of a globalized world in crisis.
- Our old way of organizing ourselves, based on institutions created decades ago, in a different context, and under very different global systemic conditions.

- Our old way of collaborating, based on prior trust in and acquaintance with the other person in a coexistence that has allowed us to observe each other and cultivate bonds.

A new world is emerging from the collapse of the old ways, and it is characterized by unlimited flexibility, speed and effectiveness. And at the moment, it is not guaranteed that these capabilities will contribute to reducing power imbalances, or bring more justice or better living conditions for all. That depends on how we embrace them and what we do with them. It is possible to embrace this new world, with its new modes, i.e. the practices that are emerging with it, and reap the rewards of an unlimited capacity for action, but for that we need to understand a few key issues:

### Empathy

On September 11, 2001, Phyllis Rodriguez lost her son Greg in the Twin Towers attack. This event was devastating and caused deep pain in her family, as it would for any other mother. But by her own account, she and her husband decided from the outset that they would not seek or support revenge. Instead, they paid attention to the families of those convicted of the attack. One of them was Zacarias Moussaoui, a French citizen and son of a Moroccan immigrant named Aicha el-Wafi. When Zacarias pleaded guilty, in 2005, Phyllis decided that she wanted to meet Aicha, because it was clear to her that Aicha would not receive any support or empathy from the American public, unlike her own family, because Aicha was part of the family of a perpetrator.

Aicha, for her part, having travelled to the United States to accompany her son in the judicial process, had decided to contact the families of some of the victims to offer her condolences. A meeting was arranged between Aicha and five families who had lost a relative in the attack. Among them was Phyllis. The two women recognized each other's common grief: the loss of their sons: Greg

was dead and Zechariah was "dead in life", in Aicha's words, i.e. living in captivity, from which he would probably never be released. The meeting allowed participants, including Phyllis and Aicha, to share their stories, talk about their losses, show pictures of their loved ones, and – in Aicha's case – offer their condolences. According to Phyllis' testimony, what she said to those people that day was: "I don't know if my son is guilty or innocent, but I want to tell you how sorry I am for what happened to your families. I know what it is like to suffer, and I feel that if there is a crime, the person responsible must be fairly judged and punished".

That meeting sparked a long-running campaign for peace and against violence that has featured the two women together. Both recognize the value of forgiveness and reconciliation as a transformative force in their lives. A force that manifests itself in a deep friendship that allows them to offer the world an example of humanity.

For us, empathy is an emotional predisposition that allows us to be open enough to accept that other people's interests, concerns, and desires are just as valid as our own and that, like our own, they are rooted in our personal stories and the conditions in which we live.

Empathy requires accepting that we are unable to see, even superficially, the various inner struggles of the people around us. Others have grown up and lived their stories in contexts that we cannot even imagine, from the family affections of their childhood to the social pressures of their immediate environment.

Nor do we have the elements to assess the intentions of others, or to weigh up how important their interests are to them. Often we can't even see what they are going through. At the same time, others also do not see our concerns, our pains or our interests. Often our actions can mislead them about our intentions.

These questions should guide us: What if the "adversaries" are as

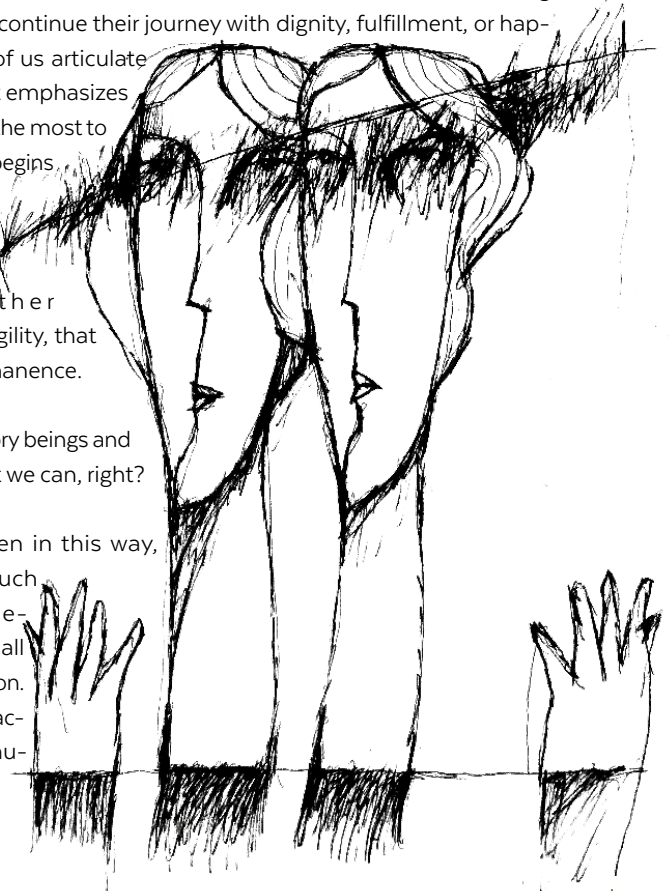
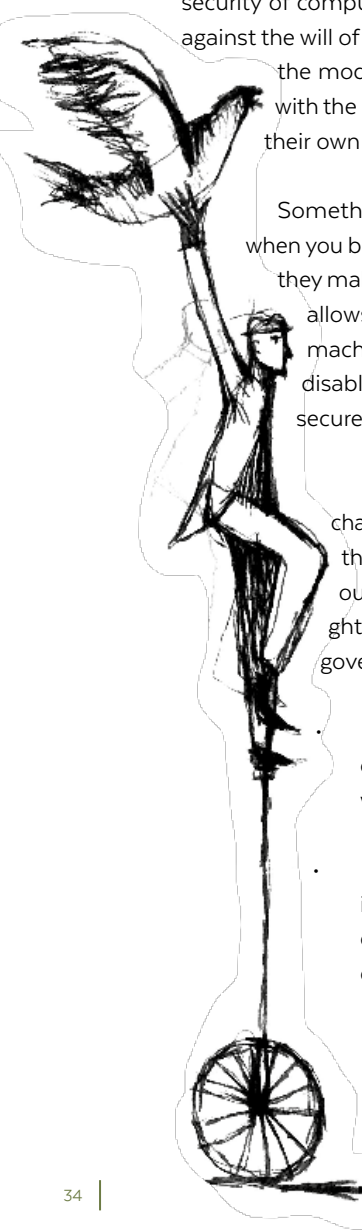
afraid of us as we are of them; what if the "others" grew up hearing about us, just as we grew up hearing about them?

But what is more important, what can guide us in the midst of the most tense moments, what can light our way through the darkness of fear and even hatred, is an absolute truth like few others: we are all going to die one day.

That fear, the ultimate fear, the fear that crowns all fears and unites us in the face of the same destiny, is death. And in the face of this stark and often unbearable reality, we all fear, we all wonder and almost all despair. And many legitimate yearnings develop from there: first, survival; and then, a good life for me and for those I love. We all want that bare minimum. Those of us who have children wish to die knowing that they can continue their journey with dignity, fulfillment, or happiness (each of us articulate it in a way that emphasizes what matters the most to us). Empathy begins and ends there: in recognizing in the other that same fragility, that same impermanence.

We are transitory beings and we all do what we can, right?

Empathy, seen in this way, puts us in touch with that element that we all have in common. And it makes accessible and hu-



manizes everything about others that, at first glance, might seem pointless, unfair or threatening. From there we can build the bridges that allow us to collaborate even with those we have historically distrusted and who have interests opposed to ours, or at least that's how we come to see them from time to time.

This is what was set in motion between Phyllis and Aicha. They recognized in each other a suffering similar to their own, and from that recognition they built a path that has brought them peace and enabled them to contribute to the lives of others

### Transparency

The saying "information is power" has long been a commonplace, but it remains a extremely valid idea, especially in an age where information seems to proliferate. This is especially true when access to information is unequal. Information asymmetries generate power asymmetries that quickly turn all collaborative processes into potential failures, because they generate mistrust that more information will be used against those who have less power.

In the words of Giselle Della Mea and Tomás de Lara:

"There must be total transparency. Information has to flow and be accessible to everyone. Important information is constantly updated to the group and historical information is recorded, for future reference.

The more information symmetry there is, the better is the equivalence between the individuals in the group, the stronger is the sense of belonging, and the easiest it is to implement a culture of self-responsibility"<sup>17</sup>.

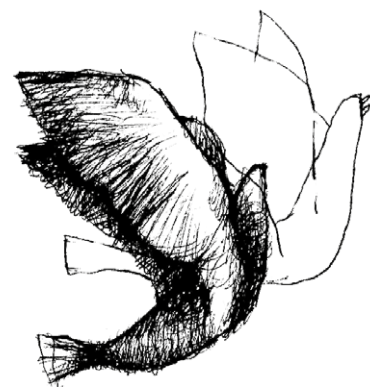
This is one of the six key principles for the authors of the article *Seis principios de la "Colaboración Extrema"* (Six principles of "Extreme Collaboration". Remember that this is about collaborating with

people we do not know, and whom we often see as rivals and even distrust, and whose interests often compete with ours. How could we operate from that starting point if we were not willing to be transparent?

However, for us, this principle has an important nuance. Confidentiality should be a possibility to be agreed upon when it protects interests of one of the participants that cannot be disregarded. For example, if we expect the collaboration of a tech company that will contribute with its development capabilities, it is likely that this company will require that details of its technology be protected in order to safeguard its intellectual property, or that information that could be strategic from the point of view of safeguarding its business performance be protected. In this sense, we think of confidentiality as a consensual agreement. The principle of transparency that we present here suggests then that stakeholders can adopt, by common agreement and in limited domains, confidentiality commitments that must be explicit and known by the participants.

### Speed

We said that for us the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are the main reference point for the challenges facing humanity right now. Readers may agree with a specific articulation of these challenges, or consider that their favorite goal is not sufficiently highlighted in the UN list, but in general terms we will consider the SDGs as a complete and sufficient list of goals to be pursued until



<sup>17</sup> Giselle Della Mea and Tomás de Lara. *Seis principios de la "Colaboración Extrema"*. Article published in *Colaboración Extrema*, Cities CAB B blog, Oct 2020.

2030. If they were met, humanity would be different, the world's population would be happier and more fulfilled, and our way of life would be sustainable.

But for that, it would be necessary to reach them timely, which, as seen, is not on track to happen.

That is, it is not on track to happen unless we build a new human capacity, a new governance whose practices allow us to achieve unprecedented speed: the speed of COVID-19 vaccines, but in activities that require engaging hundreds of millions of people working together to meet the SDGs.

The good news is that this is already happening.

Let's not forget that Greta became a global reference on climate change in little more than a year. And that millions of people followed her.

### Openness

Our old ways are full of organizations where affiliation is conditioned to very clear boundaries. You are either part of it or not. At work, for example. If you are employed by Microsoft, you are part of the company. When you resign or get fired, you are no longer part of the company. The same goes for sports clubs, schools, colleges, universities or institutes. You are either part of it or not.



<sup>18</sup> Raymond, E. (2001). *The Cathedral & the Bazaar*. United States, O'Reilly Media.

But in the book *The Cathedral and the Bazaar*<sup>18</sup>, Eric Raymond shows a peculiarity of the free software community, with an example: if you wrote a line of Linux code five years ago, then you became part of the Linux developer community, even if you have never touch a computer or speak to any of the other members of the same community again. That, which may seem more familiar now, was rare in 2001. A way of seeing collaborative relationships that was emerging from the world of software developers but that was to spread along with the ICT revolution, eventually reaching every citizen of the world.

IN SHORT, the new future organizations that are hacking our old governance and that would enable us to meet the SDGs on time, while preserving the best of the world we know, meet these attributes:

- they cultivate empathy
- they manage their information with absolute transparency
- they are dynamic
- they have fuzzy membership rules.



## THIS CAN BE A WAY FORWARD

The organization created by the United Nations to address the climate crisis is the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), which was adopted in 1992 and entered into force in 1994. It operates as a treaty that binds the governments that ratify it.

The Conference of the Parties (COP), which is the governing body of the convention, is responsible for implementing the agreements adopted under the convention. Representatives of the governments that had signed the convention, attended to the COPs.

Of course, these conferences involve complex negotiations that have economic, social and political implications for the countries participating. From the outset, the discussions involved answering questions about how to strike a balance between the demands being made by, on the one hand, industrialized countries, which had already been emitting CO<sub>2</sub> for years and, on the other hand, developing countries, which were just starting to emit CO<sub>2</sub>. How would limits and restrictions be defined? Who would have to reduce their emissions, when, and by how much? And participating governments, with their teams of advisors and representatives of multiple private interests, had to contemplate the cost such agreements represented to them.

This complexity stems from a feature of COPs, which is obvious in the common sense under which intergovernmental organizations operate, but that determinate the speed at which agreements can be reached, the degree of commitment of each participant, and the ability to track them: each agreement must be ratified by all governments that subscribe to the convention. It seems obvious, doesn't it?

Have you ever had to sign a contract with a clause you don't fully understand? What if that clause actually means that next year your income will be halved? We'd better discuss it with the lawyer, who will then discuss it with the experts in his or her firm and give you recommendations that involve proposing other wording for the

clause. Imagine that, but on the scale of dozens of governments that must ratify the agreement, after consultation with their respective parliaments or equivalent bodies.

COP 21 produced the "Paris Agreement", one of the most important global pacts on climate change, under which participating countries committed to reduce their carbon emissions. At the occasion, it was described as a "historic turning point" in the efforts to curb global warming, in the words of Laurent Fabius, France's foreign minister at the time.

BUT...

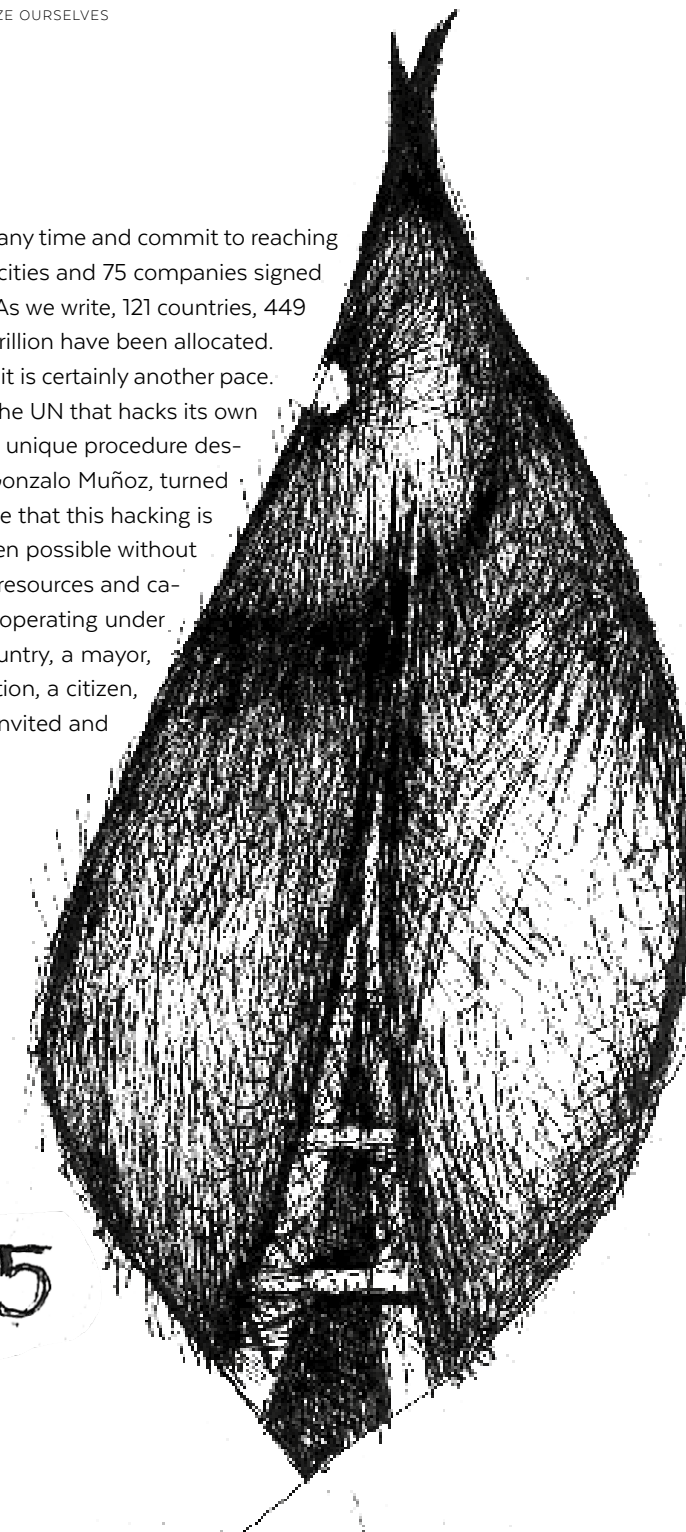
It's called COP 21 because it was the 21st conference (one per year). In other words, it took 21 years for them to reach an agreement on carbon emissions! An agreement that, by the way, still has a number of unresolved issues: whether it was signed by the countries that produce the most emissions, whether it is possible to verify the compliance of each of the countries that signed it... But more importantly, the agreement did not enter into force until it was ratified by the fifty-five Parties representing at least 55% of total global emissions. In 2017, the United States, under Trump's leadership, withdrew from the agreement, and various reports in the press indicate that the developed countries that signed the agreement were not meeting their commitments.

In conclusion, an enormous effort, which takes decades to produce results and whose stability depends on the internal political tensions of different countries and the capacity of their States' bureaucracy to both promote and measure changes.

Let's compare this with the Climate Ambition Alliance. On September 23, 2019 during the Climate Summit, convened by the UN Secretary-General, in New York, the Climate Ambition Alliance was launched under the leadership of COP25 Champion Gonzalo Muñoz. This new initiative was open to those willing to commit to Carbon Neutrality by 2050 (i.e. to reduce their net CO<sub>2</sub> emissions to

zero). With no need for negotiations or consensus, everyone could join at any time and commit to reaching the goal by the path of their choice. On the same day, 66 countries, 102 cities and 75 companies signed up. In addition, USD 2 trillion in assets were pledged to further the goal. As we write, 121 countries, 449 cities, 992 companies, and 505 universities have signed up, and USD 4 trillion have been allocated. All this in twelve months. Compared to the twenty-five years of the COP, it is certainly another pace. This is the mechanism we call hacking. Moreover, we could say that it is the UN that hacks its own operating models, opening up space for an organization that follows this unique procedure described. It was done under the leadership of COP 25, whose Champion, Gonzalo Muñoz, turned out to be rather a social entrepreneur than mere a bureaucrat. Let us note that this hacking is not about fighting the COP, nor replacing it. In fact, it would not have been possible without the COP. It is rather a kind of complement, but one that brings different resources and capacity for action, free from the constraints imposed by the reasoning of operating under absolute consensus and hierarchically. The national government of a country, a mayor, a businesswoman or man, a transnational group, a civil society organization, a citizen, etc. can join this initiative. In other words, all forms of organizations are invited and can potentially participate.

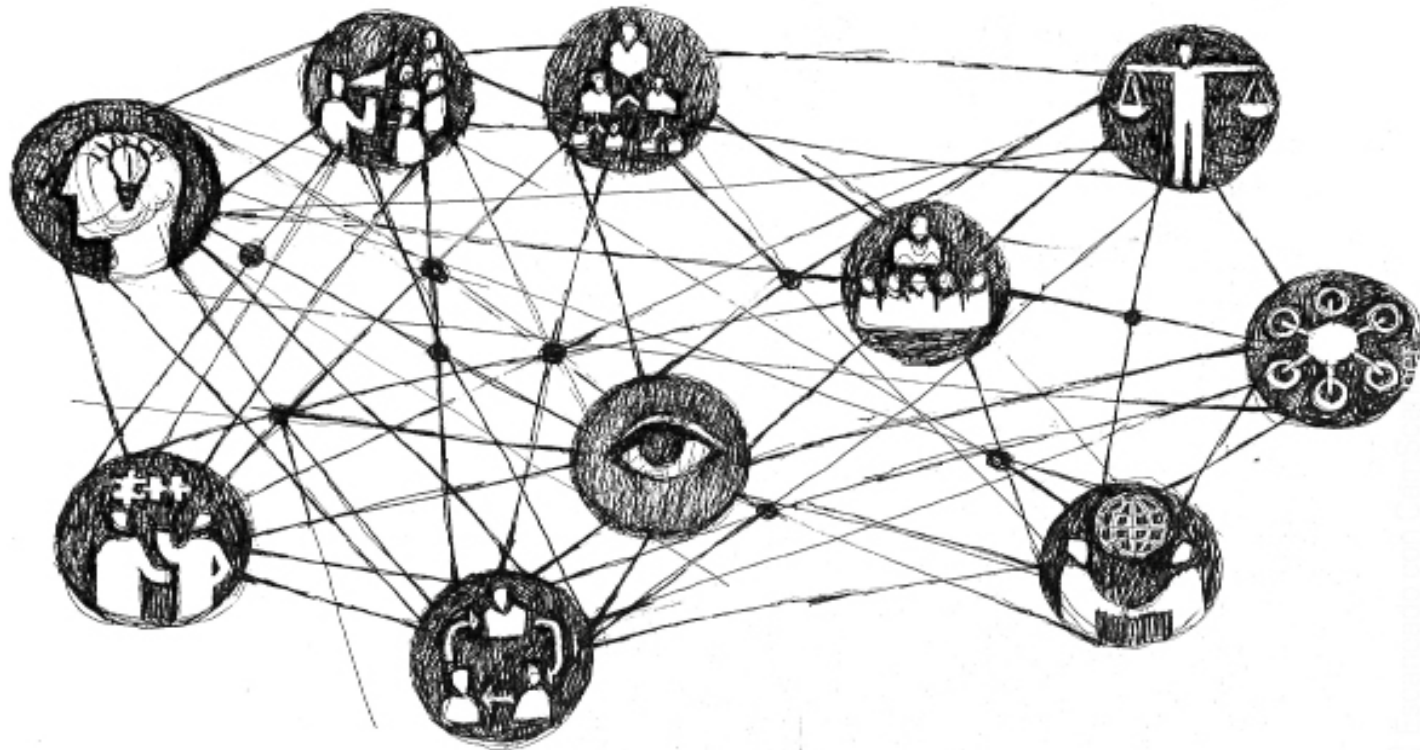
PARIS 2015



## IT'S NOT ONE, IT'S THOUSANDS!

Don Tapscott, the celebrated Canadian researcher, consultant and entrepreneur, has been leading researches on the new organizational models that are emerging in the context of the ICT revolution since 2014. This project was called Global Solution Networks, and its principles were set out in a founding article published by Tapscott<sup>19</sup> himself.

Among the results produced by the Global Solutions Network is a taxonomy for classifying what Tapscott calls "multi-stakeholder networks for global problem solving".



Our version of their description and examples of the 10 categories are as follows:

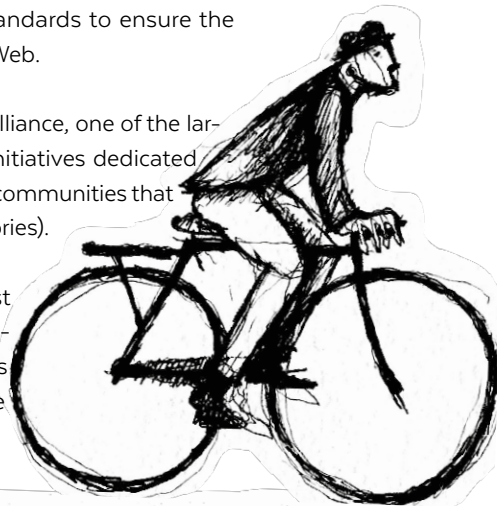
<sup>19</sup> Tapscott, D. (2014). Introducing Global Solution Networks. Understanding the New Multi-Stakeholder Models for Global Cooperation, Problem Solving and Governance. Innovations, (2014) 9 (1-2), pp. 3-46.

NETWORK TYPE	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLES
Knowledge Networks	Their main function is to develop new thinking, research, ideas, and policies that can be useful for solving global problems. They focus on creating new ideas, not promoting them.	Stockholm International Peace Research Institute; Global Network for Women and Children's Health Research, Wikipedia, TED.
Operational and Delivery Networks	These kinds of networks actually achieve the change they seek, complementing or even bypassing the efforts of traditional institutions.	Crisis Commons, Kiva, 350.org, The Standby Task Force, Digital Democracy, The Red Cross, World Wildlife Fund, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation Global Health Program, Medicines for Malaria Venture, The Microcredit Summit Campaign.
Policy Networks	Sometimes networks create government policies, even if they are made up of non-governmental actors. Policy networks may or may not be created or even fostered by formal governments or government institutions. Some policy networks support policy development or create an alternative to them. Policy networks also exist to create and foster debate on policy issues.	The Internet Governance Forum, International Competition Network, The PRI (Principles for Responsible Investment).
Advocacy Networks	These networks seek to change the agenda or policies of governments, companies or other institutions.	Avaaz.org, Keep a Child Alive, Conscious Capitalism (advocates to corporations). Hundreds of these networks are listed at World Advocacy.com.
Watchdog Networks	These networks examine institutions to ensure that they behave properly. Issues range from human rights, corruption, and the environment to financial services.	Human Rights Watch, The Environmental Working Group, Amnesty International, The Global Reporting Initiative.
Platforms	Some networks try to provide platforms for other networks to organize.	Ushahidi, Challenge Post, Change.org, seToolbelt, Code for America, thesojo.net
Global Standards Networks	Non-state organizations that develop technical specifications and standards for virtually anything, including standards for the Internet itself.	Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF), World Wide Web Consortium.
Governance Networks	These are multi-stakeholder networks that have achieved or claimed the right and responsibility for non-institutional global governance.	Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers, International Organization of Securities Commissions, Marine Stewardship Council, Forest Stewardship Council, The Kimberly Process Certification Scheme.
Networked Institutions	Some networks provide such a wide range of capacities that they could be described as networked institutions. They are not state-based, but are truly multi-stakeholder networks. The value they generate can range from knowledge generation, advocacy, and policy development, to providing solutions to global problems.	The World Economic Forum, The Clinton Global Initiative, The Global Water Partnership.
Diasporas	Diasporas are global communities made up of people dispersed from their ancestral lands but who share a common culture and a strong identity with their homeland. Thanks to the Internet, these people and their affiliated organizations can now collaborate in multi-stakeholder networks. One of the functions of many of today's diasporas is to address and help solve common global problems.	OneVietnam Network, International Diaspora Engagement Alliance, African Idea Marketplace.



In the right column, you will notice that this list of “multi-stakeholder networks for global problem solving” includes none other than the following (which are only examples):

- World Economic Forum, where the world’s top business and political leaders coordinate their efforts to discuss the world’s major issues.
- Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, two of the main organizations responsible for overseeing the safeguarding of Human Rights around the world.
- World Wide Web Consortium (W3C), the consortium that proposes recommendations and standards to ensure the long-term growth of the World Wide Web.
- International Diaspora Engagement Alliance, one of the largest networks of organizations and initiatives dedicated to supporting diaspora communities (communities that have migrated from their home territories).
- Avaaz.org, perhaps the world’s largest activist network, which provides a platform to mobilize support for causes that communities everywhere decide are relevant.

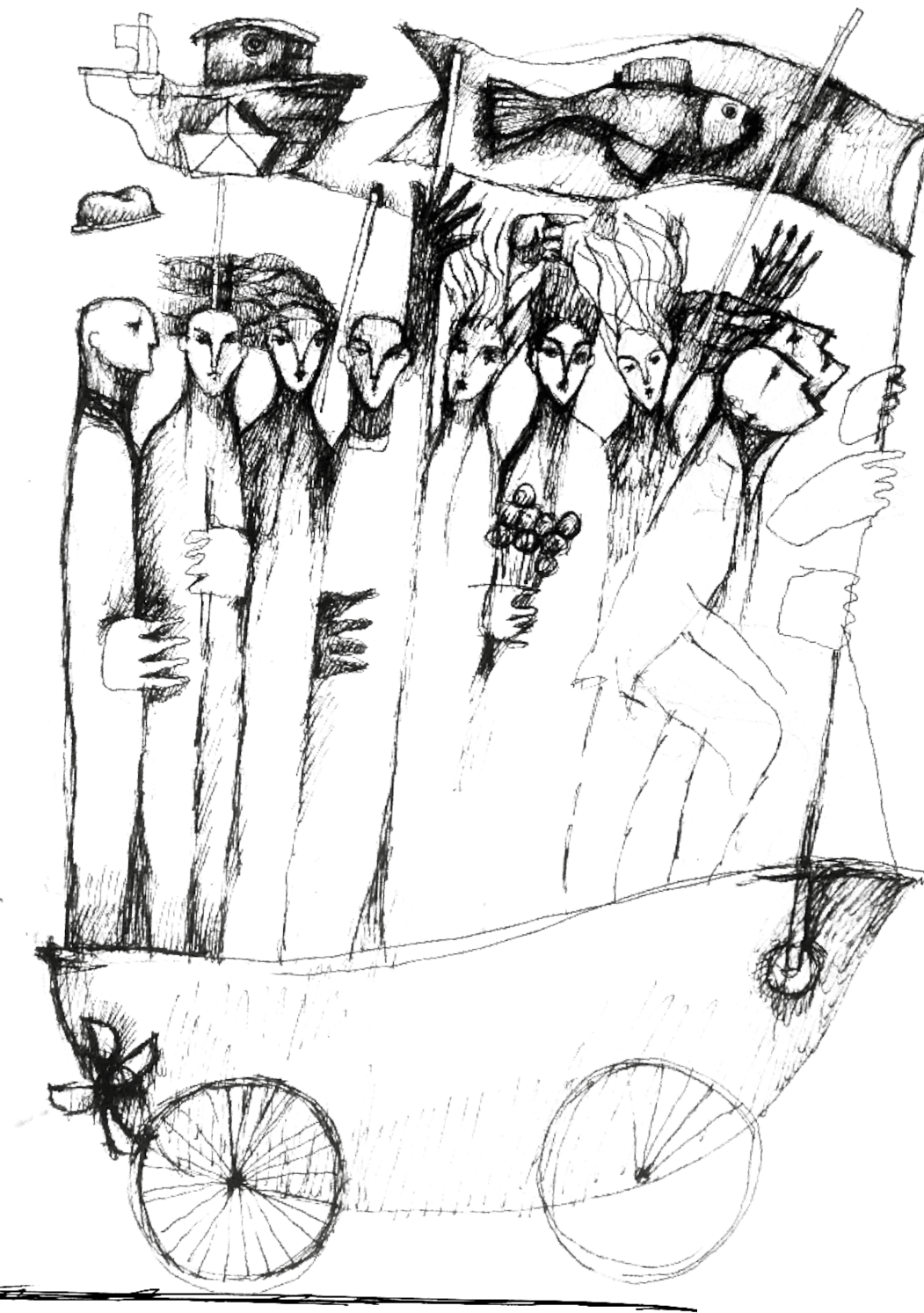


An exhaustive list is impossible, because it is growing all the time. Note that these are not networks that emerge from a government, nor are they attached to specific political parties, nor do they depend on centralized powers of any kind. Some, like Avaaz, even regulate how they receive donations and how much it can be, so as not to be dependent on large private interests. These networks, which a couple of decades ago were impossible, are shaping the way we organize things as important in our lives as regulations regarding the Internet.

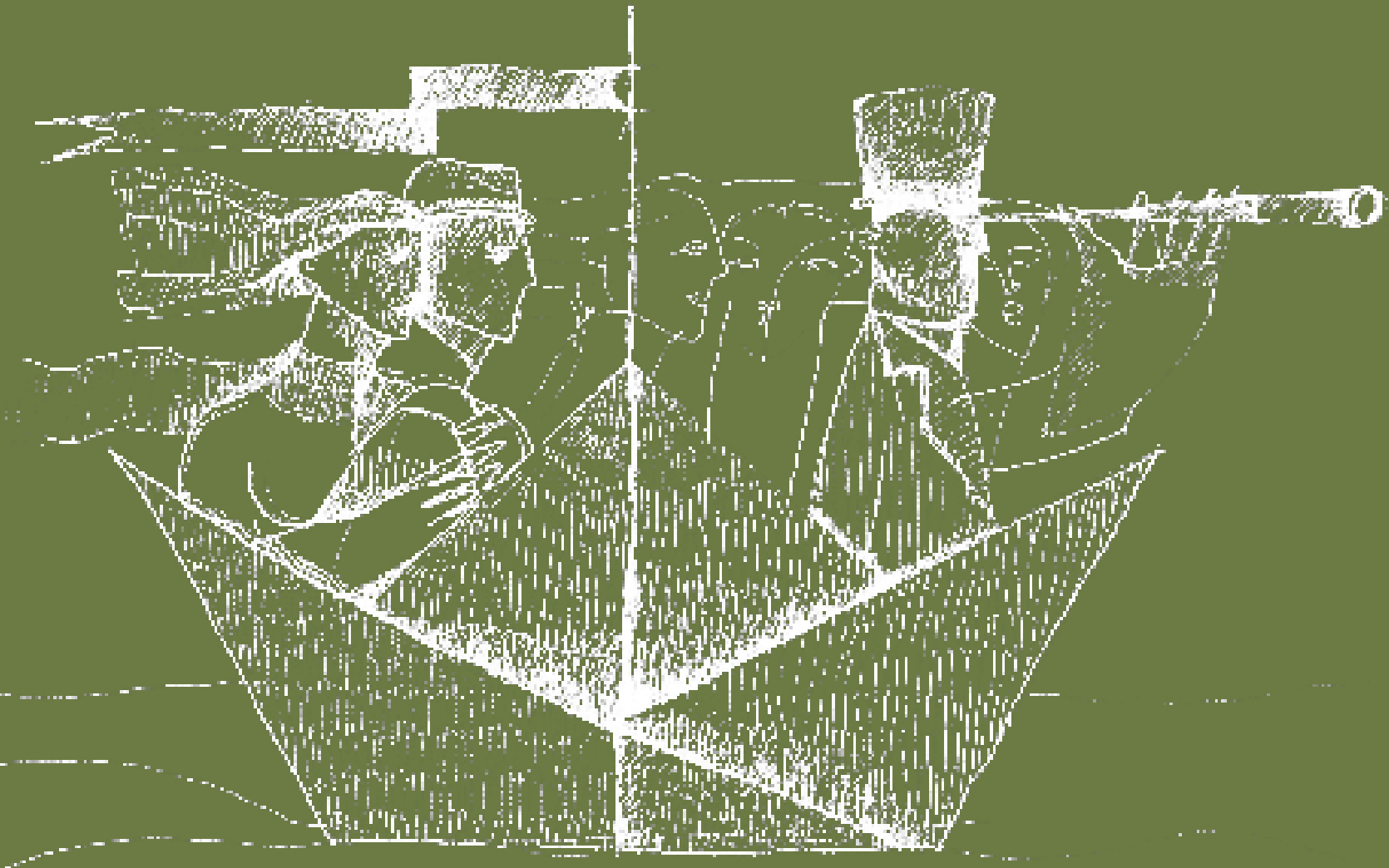
The world we live in cannot be understood without considering the growing power of these networks.

The research by Tapscott and his team is highly recommendable for the purposes for which this notebook is intended. We suggest reading the article and following the progress on the program’s official website<sup>20</sup>.

With these organizations in mind, and Tapscott’s way of looking at them, we now need to reflect on the question of how we collaborate. That is the subject of the next chapter.



<sup>20</sup> <http://gsnetworks.org/>



### III. EXPLORING OUR ABILITY TO COLLABORATE



To understand extreme collaboration, we want to reflect first on the term "collaboration": what activities are involved, in which ways we can collaborate, what is required to do it.

## I. TRADITIONAL COLLABORATION

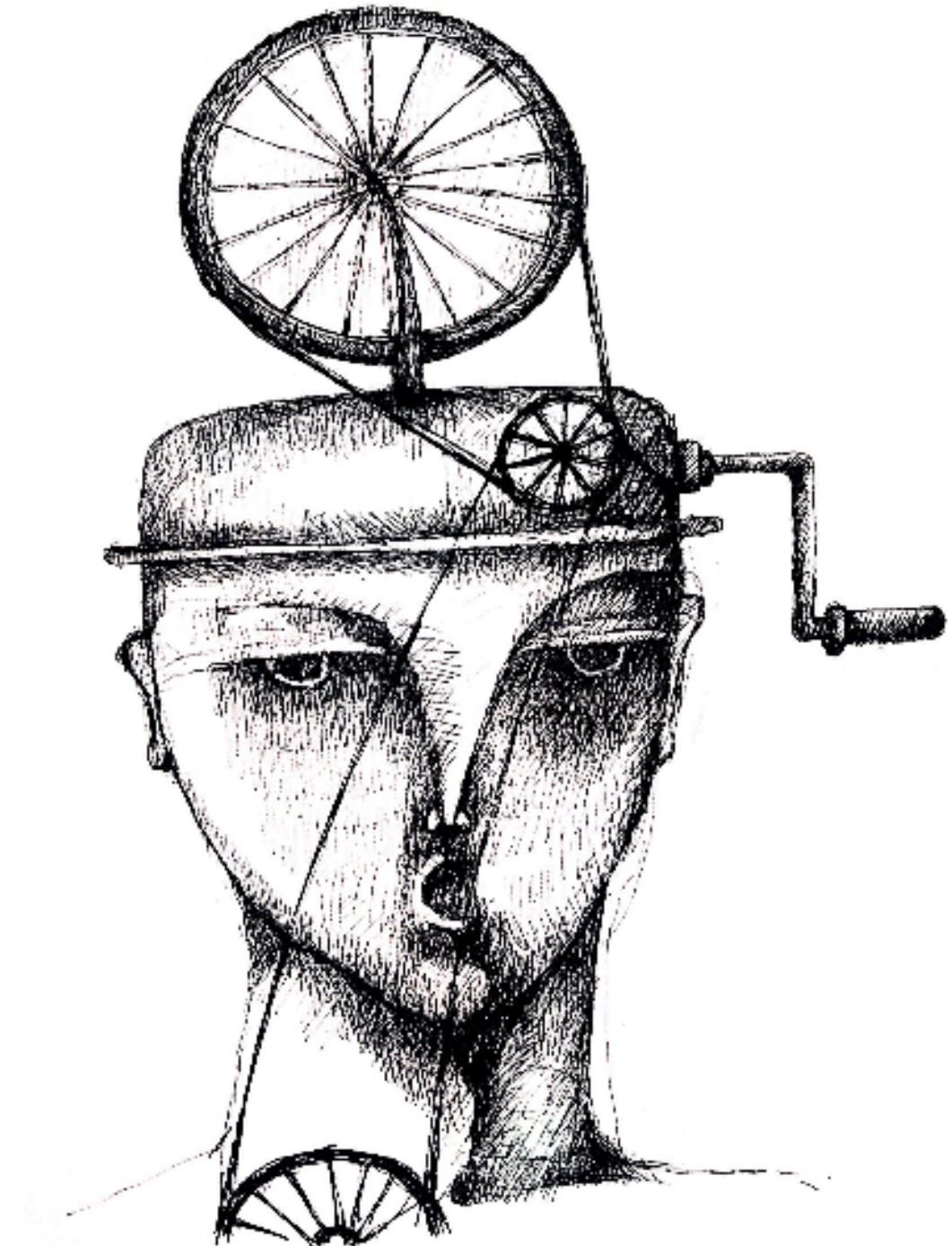
This is the way our ancestors used to collaborate, and it is the DNA of our civilization. Nothing, absolutely nothing that we know in our human world would have been possible without it. It probably comes from ancient times, when small communities of homo sapiens learned to coordinate their actions to gather food, hunt, fetch water, make fire, shelter from the cold, and face their enemies.

We can see it everywhere. Peter has known the people in his neighborhood his whole life, and when his neighbor comes to ask for help to fix an issue with his car, he collaborates with him without thinking too much about it. They trust each other, they know who they are and where they live, and perhaps they even consider each other friends. In any case, they are part of a small social network rich in daily interactions. Neither is a threat to the other, even if from time to time they may have minor disputes over a fight between their young children, or because one's dog hurt the other one's cat. It is something that is ingrained and enduring. In modest neighborhoods in Latin America, when someone becomes very old and has no relatives to take care of them, it is usually their neighbors who provide the necessary care to keep them alive. It happens in a seemingly spontaneous but inescapable way.

If we were to define traditional collaboration in terms of rules, we would say that we collaborate when:

- Collaboration is a voluntary and deliberate act.
- We know the person with whom we want to collaborate.
- Our intentions for the collaboration with that person are well aligned.

- We are clear about what we are going to do together.
- We have mutual trust in the honesty with which we collaborate. That is, neither person thinks of the other as having any intention other than that expressed in their declared willingness to collaborate. It does not work, for example, when we think that the neighbor came to our house to help us with the taps because he wants to use the opportunity to flirt with our partner.
- We have reciprocal trust in our commitment. That is to say, each individual believes the other is capable of fulfilling his or her part of the task.
- We have mutual trust in each other's competence. That is, each person thinks that the other knows how to do what they are promising to do, and that there is consistency in their words and actions. We do not ask our neighbor for help with the electrical installation of the house if we think they might cause a fire.



## II. OPEN COLLABORATION

This is not a novelty either, but it arose when we started to have tribes larger than the family, when cities and the first conceptions of what later became countries appeared.

Open collaboration occurs when some of the rules that we enunciated for the previous case are broken. In general terms, we would say that it happens when the purpose is enough to summon and mobilize us to collaborate with people we do not know or do not trust.

Obvious examples are collects organized to raise funds for a noble cause: Mrs. Susan's cancer treatment or the construction of a school in a village. This can happen in an artisanal way: have you ever been stopped in the street by children asking for a contribution to the school collect? It can also happen in a glamorous way: think of the fundraising dinner for the candidacy of that senator with presidential ambitions. And with less glamour, but high participation, the thousands of invitations that circulate on the Internet to collaborate with people affected by the pandemic, whom we don't know.

A more massive version: the Telethon<sup>21</sup>. Millions of people in a country working together to donate money to a cause they consider good and just: helping children with disabilities. Let's take a look at this case from the point of view of ordinary citizens, i.e. not from the point of view of the organizations that coordinate to produce the campaign, but from the point of view of each and every person who makes a small donation or buys a specific product to contribute.

Let's examine how the rules operate:

- Is it a deliberate and voluntary act? Definitely yes. If you don't want to, you don't cooperate. But when you do, you can see that you are doing it. It's a decision you make, and you can usually see the progress and results of the work you help fund.
- Do we know the person with whom we want to collaborate?
  - No. Possibly we know the people who are organizing it. And sometimes we even distrust them, but we collaborate anyway. If you live in a country where there is a Telethon, you may have heard people say in the middle of the campaigns that the organizers are only looking for profit for themselves and that the whole thing is a scheme. Often those who say that, say that will help anyway, if only because of the pressure from their children at home. When they go to the bank to donate, what do they know about the person in front of them? They don't know anything. Do they care if they don't know? Not at all. Because it's not relevant.
  - Are our purposes aligned with those we collaborate with? Definitely yes! That is central.
  - Are we clear about what we are going to do together? Yes, but in very limited way. There are rules proposed by the organizers, and as result of them we can decide to join or not. Small donors have no influence on the design of these rules.
  - The sincerity, responsibility and competence of those who contribute are irrelevant to the decision to make a donation. It is enough to trust that the organization receiving the donation will do its job and that it knows how to do it.

Another, more recent example that is transforming the way things are done is crowdfunding. There are platforms for this end, where you can declare that your project serves a noble, just, or beautiful cause; and invite those who want to contribute to make a donation. The Extreme Collaboration Notebooks were, in fact, created this way. We proposed the idea of writing them through a virtual platform, we asked for help from many people with whom we have direct contact, and also from others with whom we have less direct contact, who in turn invited others we don't know. In the end, 150 people from 24 countries donated money to produce the notebooks, which allowed us to finance the work of a team of professionals to design the narrative of the text, the writing, the corrections, the aesthetic design, the artistic images, the layout, the digital edition, and the printing.

But this form of collaboration is not as new as it seems. In 1688, the English poet Alexander Pope financed his work of translating Homer's Iliad through a fundraising campaign that promised his donors a copy of the book once it was ready. The names of the 750 sponsors appeared on the first volume. Similarly, when the French people donated the famous Statue of Liberty to the United States, the construction of the pedestal became a problem due to a shortage of funds. It was Joseph Pulitzer, editor of the New York World, who solved the problem by launching a campaign to raise the necessary funds. This was in 1884.

Open collaboration occurs when, called together by a purpose, people mobilize and collaborate in some way, without knowing or necessarily trusting each other.

Think of other forms of open collaboration:

- Political campaigns
- Wikipedia
- Movements like #metoo

In all these cases, thousands or millions of people are doing something, however small or simple, to contribute to a cause they care about. And they don't need to trust other collaborators to do so.

In the case of movements like #metoo, there is an additional difference. If you think of traditional political campaigns (the Democratic Party calling to vote for Obama) or the Telethon (Don Francisco or Jerry Lewis calling to donate and buy products of certain brands), in both cases, these are known and visible organizers.

The #metoo movement, in turn, is a more atomized movement, which does not require a single visible face. This is something that was not possible before the telecommunications revolution, and which arises because the availability and immediacy of communication through social networks and instant messaging applications give rise to an atomized and dynamic capacity for coordination that – we could say – is self-governed. At the same time, a collective intelligence appears, which is capable of reacting in real time to events and agreeing on actions by thousands of people in a few minutes.

This was not possible in the world of our ancestors or in the world of the Telethon.

<sup>21</sup> The Telethon is a campaign to raise funds to support the rehabilitation of children with disabilities. It is organized around a televised event lasting just over 24 hours. It has been held in Chile since 1978 and the idea has been adopted by other countries. Its best known face is the man who spearheaded its creation in Chile: Don Francisco, the famous television entertainer, inspired by the campaign of the same name initiated by Jerry Lewis, in the United States, in 1966.



### III. STRUCTURAL COLLABORATION

So far we have seen two categories of collaboration that have in common the fact that we know we are collaborating, we know what we are collaborating for, and we choose to do so.

But what happens when we engage in a process in which we collaborate “by design”?

When we say “by design”, we mean that someone literally designed the way in which we collaborate in the process. This is, for example, what happens when you do a Google search. Are you thinking of collaborating with someone? Chances are you’re not. What you are doing is pursuing an individual goal, which concerns yourself only, to solve your problem (or your son’s or daughter’s doing a homework assignment). But it turns out that Google uses your searches, puts them into an algorithm, and with that data improves the experience and searchability of subsequent users.

Did they ask your permission? No.

Do you mind if they didn’t ask your permission? Probably not.

Would it be more elegant if they did? Maybe yes, but perhaps the experience of using Google would be completely destroyed if they asked you every time, and additionally, if half the users said no, the perceived value would be reduced to everyone (including the other half).

Amazon is similar. You log in, search for an author you’re interested in, look at their books, read the reviews. You click here and there, as you would literally do in a physical bookshop. You let yourself be attracted by a book by another author that the system suggests to you because it might interest you...

Wait: how do they know which book to suggest? Because they compare you with other users. Millions of users. People like you or us, who read some of the same books. Amazon uses an algorithm

that compares your search patterns, your interaction on the site, and your purchase patterns with the patterns of its millions of other users. And it turns out that you are similar to a few, say ten thousand other people who read the same things as you, who have bought 90% of the same books, and have 95% of their ratings similar to yours. If most of those ten thousand people read John Doe’s book on the emotions of amoebas, chances are you’re interested in it too, right? Well, it’s good business to suggest it to you, because you’ll probably end up buying it.

From the point of view of collaboration, we can say that both Google and Amazon have foreseen that your interactions with their systems will improve the experience of other users, and that their interactions will improve yours. They have designed their operating rules to make it work that way.

This way of collaborating breaks one by one all the rules we have seen. You collaborate without seeking it, and often without knowing it, with people you don’t know, with a purpose you don’t share, without trusting each other. How does it happen then? Because the orchestrator of structural collaboration does that for you.

Amazon “knows” its customers and interprets the interests of those who search for books on the same topics as you. It also knows every interaction you have with the system and has the ability to analyze millions of pieces of data in such a way that you can “trust” the information that data can generate about patterns of searching, buying and reading books.

Another example of how structural collaboration takes care of those who participate in it is Airbnb, the online home sharing marketplace that allows anyone to make a room in their home, or a flat, or a whole house available for others to stay. The system has spread at the speed of light around the world, and has transformed the hotel industry, but in retrospect, its success hinges on something that might have sounded problematic a few years ago: to become a

landlord, we need to trust strangers and let them stay in our home! In turn, the stranger has to trust the person who will host them. The way in which this trust is produced is through the historical record of opinions and evaluations of some users about others. By rating my experience, I am collaborating with all the users of the system to produce the trust that makes it possible to enjoy the benefits that Airbnb offers.

But while Amazon or Airbnb may seem like extraordinary examples, they are not the ones with the greatest impact. If we had to rank technologies and practices of structural collaboration for their global impact, we would put blockchain at the top of the ranking.

If you are unfamiliar with the term, here is a simple description: blockchain is a decentralized database, i.e. its records are copied simultaneously on countless computers around the world.

That sounds like a technicality, but it means a lot of things that are revolutionizing the way we can relate to each other and do business. Some analysts compare the invention of blockchain to the invention of the Internet, in terms of its impact on the lives of everyone in the world.

Think about what happens when Mary and John want to make a simple transaction. Mary sells John a jar of jam for five dollars, for which John must pay. If cash is used to carry out the transaction, Mary receives some dollar bills in exchange for the jar and that closes the cycle. The bills that pass from the hands of one to the hands of the other are unique and cannot be used more than once at the same time. Mary now has the five dollars to spend only once in any other transaction.

But what if the transaction is electronic? The five dollars is not a single object, but a piece of information: John’s payment is a record that changes in the databases of both of their banks. Therefore, the banks guarantee the transparency of the operation, and con-

sequently, both rely on their respective banks to keep track. This way we are sure that John cannot use the same five dollars to pay for something else, and that Mary will have them available for a future transaction.

But the difference between the direct transaction with a dollar bill and the digital transaction is that the latter requires some intermediary that oversees the process, in this case the banks. What happens if John wants to wire the money to Mary, without intermediaries? He can’t do it without the banks, can he?

Yes, he can. Because in 2008 Satoshi Nakamoto (an alias used by the creators of Bitcoin that to this day have managed to remain anonymous) came along and invented Bitcoin, and to make it work he created a way of keeping secure accounting records, based on what we have described as a decentralized database.

The idea is that a blockchain is a distributed accounting record, which is backed up on millions of computers around the world. It is secure, because no one has control over all the parts that make it up, and therefore, it allows for absolute traceability of transactions.

With these blockchain-supported “cryptocurrencies”, Mary and John can make their transaction and be sure that the money passing from one to the other is unique and maintains its value. Moreover, it is verifiable whether John paid Mary or not, in a way that no one in the world can question.

## IV. EXTREME COLLABORATION

What other applications does blockchain have? Many, but especially those that critically require data security and integrity. Things like:

- Digital money (cryptocurrencies). Money created in the digital world, whose accounting is stored on a blockchain.
- Tendering or contracting systems, which need to ensure transparency.
- Electronic voting systems, in which it is important to eliminate the risk of computer fraud to skew election results in favor of one or the other.
- Deeds, which allow you to back up not only who owns a piece of land, but exactly where its boundaries are.

Every time a user uses blockchain-supported applications, they unknowingly collaborate with millions of other people doing the same. My bitcoin transaction generates a record that is stored on the bitcoin blockchain on millions of computers around the world, contributing to the integrity of a system that one second later will be used by another person in the Netherlands and another in Nigeria.

Extreme collaboration incorporates some elements of the previous ones, especially the first two, but breaks other rules.

We call it extreme because the biggest inflection it contains is that it literally allows "collaboration with the enemy". Correction: it not only allows, but requires it. If we want to get to grips with climate change in time, or prevent the poisoning of the seas, we are going to need countries that have tensions with each other to work together towards these common goals.

Extreme collaboration requires a strong alignment around a common purpose, which is important to all those who are called upon to collaborate. This includes those who have historically been adversaries or those who do not know each other. And around that purpose it opens a space for collaboration. This phrase is important: a space for collaboration. In the paradigm of extreme collaboration there is no "roadmap" to which we all subscribe. There are multiple roadmaps, each referring to an initiative – or a narrow set of specific initiatives – that a limited group of participants commits to, each of which advances the common purpose in some way. You don't like everyone at the table? That is ok, collaborate with those you can. You don't like Rosario's project? Don't collaborate with that project. You don't trust Mario? Then assess whether he could make a specific contribution to your project that is not risky for you.

These notebooks propose a method to achieve this strange approach we're talking about, so bear with me if it seems ridiculous. For now, let's see how this kind of collaboration compares to our system of rules.

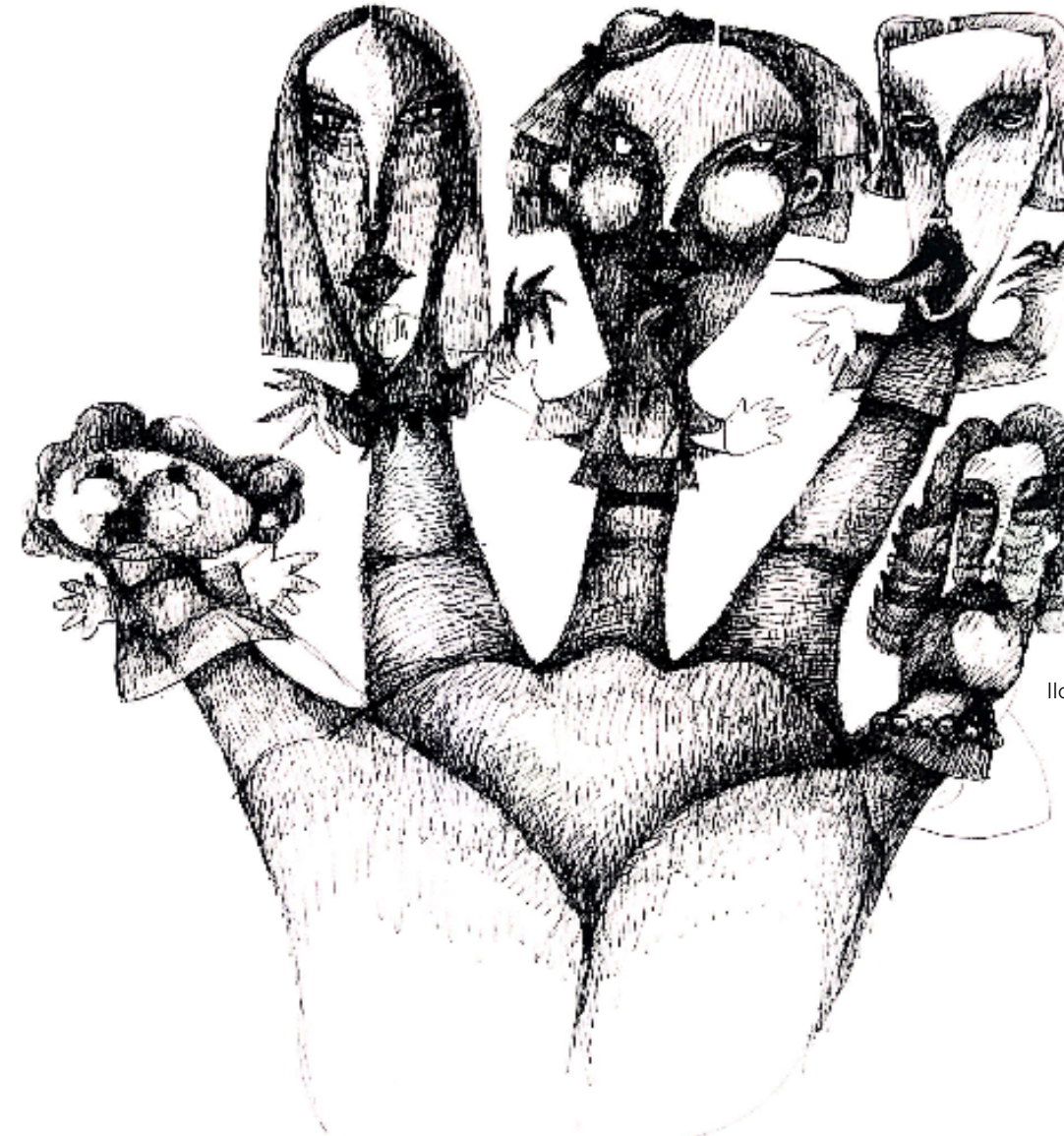
In extreme collaboration:

- Collaboration is a voluntary and deliberate act.
- We do not necessarily know the people with whom we want to collaborate.
- Our intentions with that person, with respect to the collaboration, are well aligned. This is the most important thing.
- We don't have an agenda, or a specific roadmap of what we will do together. And this is not a problem.

- Do we trust the sincerity with which we collaborate with each other? Maybe not, but the way we orchestrate the collaboration allows us to move forward without risk. Or at any rate, it is a risk far outweighed by the benefits of working together.
- Do we have mutual trust in each other's accountability? Not necessarily, but it can be built.
- The same goes for mutual trust in each other's competencies.

That is, extreme collaboration becomes possible when we allow ourselves to work with others around a purpose large enough to include those who are adversaries in more specific social, political, economic or technical spaces; and when we also allow ourselves the flexibility to collaborate in parallel, in multiple groups or teams, without a single roadmap, driving initiatives aligned only by common purposes.

Of course, this is possible when the orchestration of collaborative spaces respects certain minimum rules that guarantee the availability for everyone to potentially collaborate with everyone. In these years of work, we have identified some conditions and strategies that have proven to be valuable when designing such spaces. In the following pages we will give an overview of these conditions and strategies, to go more deeply into each of them in the following notebooks.







IV. WHAT IS  
OUR BET

## LOOKING FOR OUR PLAYING FIELD

We say that humanity is undergoing a process of massive, global cultural change, and that our job is to help accelerate it.

But how is this change happening?

Since we are facing an atomized, distributed phenomenon, with millions of agents operating at the same time in different paths, a good initial question could be: what is the atom, that is, what is the minimum human group for this to happen?

This is a central question, because what we are trying to find out is how to make the greatest possible impact and accelerate cultural change. Let's think in these terms: minimum community for impact.

Let's go back to Greta for a moment. Her movement, which is now global, successfully positioned a certain sense of urgency in the public opinion, mobilizing millions of young people on the streets in thousands of cities around the world. What could we say was the minimum community of action? If you saw it happen in your city or neighborhood, you may have a hypothesis.

The first idea one might venture is: the schools, or whatever the educational institutions of the 15-16 year old students who marched in Fridays for Future are called in each place. Sounds good. Hundreds of thousands of small groups of students getting excited by the example of Greta and her friends, talking about the urgency of joining in, coordinating to participate, often under the leadership of their student councils. But what happens if only one school in a city like Buenos Aires joins in? Possibly nothing, except for those who participate. Well, not nothing. After all, that's how it started: with a handful of Swedish children lobbying their parliament. Nothing in the sense that the citizens of Buenos Aires don't notice it. The Parliament of Argentina doesn't hear about it. The country's public

opinion is indifferent. That would be one more of thousands of small marches that occur in Latin American countries, with no echo other than the voice of those involved. In other words, the school or the college clearly do not have the scale to become the trigger we are looking for. It does not have the minimum scale to have an impact. It is necessary to go to a larger scale.

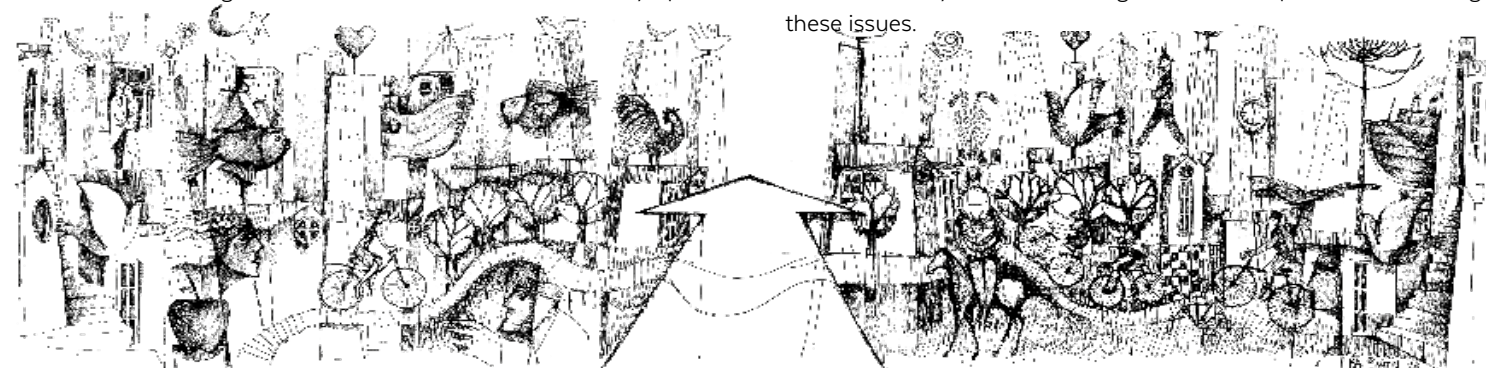
The scale of the community is larger. A country?

No doubt a whole country can join a large cultural movement of transformation, but is that the scale of the initial community?

In Chile we have some examples to look for an answer. Those who have followed recent events in the press will know that on October 18, 2019 an unprecedented social process began, which has been called a "social explosion", and which has a series of political, economic and cultural aspects that make it profoundly complex. But seen from afar, it looks like a national phenomenon. After all, if one stops to look at the demands that move the majority behind the marches, things appear that are transversal to the whole country:

- the pension system
- gender-based violence
- the minimum wage and, in general, income distribution
- the lack of health coverage (which has manifested itself so dramatically during the pandemic)
- spaces for citizen participation
- the education system
- corruption

These issues are not new in Chile. They appear in every political campaign, on all sides. Any candidate for high office has to promise something on these issues.



Of course, there are other issues that are equally important, but we could say that they are more contingent, because they do not refer to the pains and concerns of every citizen in general, but to those of more specific groups, or occur in specific contexts. These include:

- the situation of the Mapuche<sup>22</sup> (their culture, their access to land, their access to economic, social and political opportunities)
- police violence and respect for human rights
- the management of the health crisis
- migrants

But, in general, these are all issues on which any Chilean has a stance and feels that somehow the way in which they evolve affects them. That might lead us to think that the country is the right scale. But is a country like Chile a space with enough common factors to have a strong enough sense of belonging and shared responsibility?

We start to doubt the possibility of choosing a country as a scale of intervention when we see what people say depending on where they live. It turns out that if you live in the Araucanía<sup>23</sup> region, the situation of the Mapuche and their conflicts with the forestry industry are a very present concern, even if you don't really care about the outcome. It affects you because the violence that causes the conflict interferes with your life. Whether you have a small tourism business that won't see customers coming to the area, or whether you simply live in Temuco<sup>24</sup> and travel on roads where you might come across a burning truck, the conflict affects you.

But if you live in Antofagasta, 2000 km to the north, in one of the most important mining regions in the world, your main concerns are different. Of course, you don't want violent conflicts in your country, but your daily life makes you pay attention to other things. For example, the relationship your economic and social network has with mining. It is not uncommon to hear people from Antofagasta ask why their region has such a small share of the economic wealth that is extracted there. It is also not uncommon to hear conversations about whether or not mining companies contribute to the development of their cities<sup>25</sup> (Antofagasta, Calama, Tocopilla, etc.).

<sup>22</sup> Mapuche is the name of the most numerous indigenous people in Chile and Argentina. The term is used both to refer specifically to the indigenous population of the Arauco area, and more broadly to the indigenous people who share the Mapuche language (Mapudungún) and part of the Mapuche culture. In Chile they represent just over 9% of the total population. Like many indigenous peoples in the Americas, the Mapuche have historical claims to ownership and use of land in territories that were occupied by their people before the arrival of the Spanish colonizers. The history of the relationship between the Mapuche people and the Chilean state, since its formation, has been marked by tension that at times has led to armed conflicts, such as the "Pacification of Araucanía". As we write these notebooks, the Arauco region is a very important area of political tension for the country, where Mapuche territorial claims are in opposition to the interests of the forestry industry and have their counterpart in a growing armed presence of the Chilean state, in a conflict that also seems to be crossed by the operation of criminal organizations. The symptom of all this is a series of violent acts that have become more frequent over time, with indigenous people murdered, leaders arrested, trucks and properties burnt, police ambushed, and so on.

<sup>23</sup> On the map, this is an area that appears more or less "in the middle" of the long strip that is Chile. In terms of population, the center is the Metropolitan Region, where Santiago is located, which accumulates approximately of the country's total population. Araucanía is an area that starts about 500 km further south. It is possible, therefore, to live in the country's capital, and be part of a vast majority that simply does not see the Araucanía conflict except through the news or the marches that occur in some parts of the city.

<sup>24</sup> One of the important cities in the Arauco area.

<sup>25</sup> Chile's mining towns are concentrated around the Atacama Desert, which starts about 1000 km north of Santiago and is the driest desert in the world.

These stories show us that the country is also not the minimal community we seek, for although some things, such as laws, are resolved at the level of nation states, the space in which their direct effects on the population are deployed is that of the city.

## That is why it seems to us that the minimum community of action is the city.

Readers may dispute this and argue that there are diverse neighborhoods in the same city and that people with different challenges, interests, and concerns live in them. This is true, but geographic proximity, connecting road infrastructure, political-administrative unity, and their regulatory frameworks and laws often offer possibilities of scale that favor extreme collaboration. One could argue that networks allow for the virtual mobilization of social, environmental, or political causes, and that this does not necessarily happen in the context of a city. But that is not our point. Our point is that people's quality of life is at stake in cities, as well as those variables that relate quality of life to care for the planet. The city is a space that allows us to collectively cultivate a responsible lifestyle with respect to the impact of each individual.

## In other words, the city is where we can cultivate a community, with certain types of relationships, types of services, types of governance, and coexistence practices that give it a certain coherence as a human group linked to a territory.



## THE GAME IS WON IN THE CITIES

*"Our struggle for global sustainability will be won or lost in cities"*

*Ban Ki-moon, former UN Secretary-General*

In terms of what personally moves each individual that we want to incorporate into the cultural change, it is in the city where they live that their quality of life is at stake, and where almost everything that matters most to them occurs, except in those cases where segregation or the difference between specific neighborhoods is so great that the inhabitants' sense of belonging is limited to their neighborhood and not to the city as a whole.

With the exception of the above, those of us who live in cities find that it is there that our quality of life is at stake. In the cities:

- we work
- we get around (walking, cycling, by car, by public transport)
- we educate our children
- we do our shopping
- we enjoy the cultural and artistic attractions that interest us: shows, libraries, etc.
- we socialize: in pubs and restaurants, in squares and parks, in each other's homes
- (and now lastly) we live our quarantines

So these issues that make our daily lives wonderful or miserable are mostly shared by those who live in the same city as us: traffic jams, the quality of educational institutions, the availability of medical services, access to housing, the labor market, air pollution, water quality and access to water, etc.

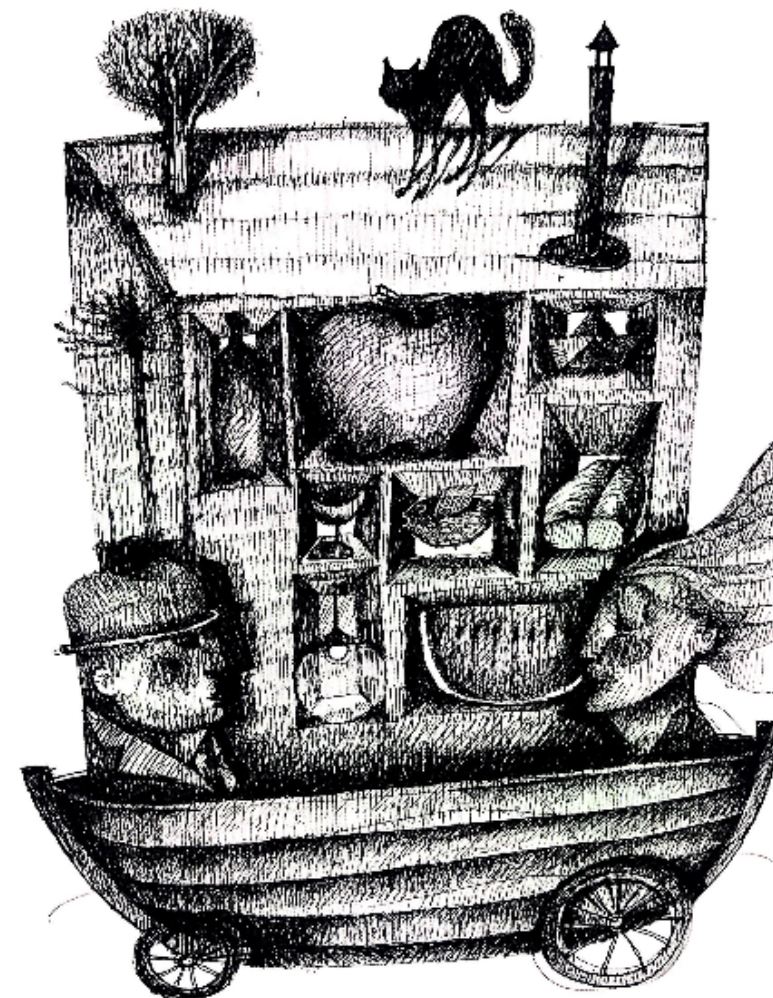
Seeing cities as the minimal community where transformation takes place implies keeping some parameters in mind. We can say that the possibilities offered by a city to become a nucleus of transformation depend not only on its geographical and population size, but also on other factors that define the creative and generative potential of its inhabitants:

- **Population:** A larger population is often correlated with a greater likelihood of diversity in terms of skills and talents, but it also brings greater challenges of coexistence and infrastructure.
- **Economic fabric:** Diversity of economic sectors also contributes to the variety of skills and talents. Cities organized around a single sector tend to be less heterogeneous.
- **Living conditions:** Cities with better housing, education, health care, cultural and social services have less difficulty in retaining talent. At the other extreme are commuter towns, where people who work in a nearby area sleep, as is often the case in mining cities, where the ratio of floating population to stable residents is often proportionately high relative to other cities.
- **The political-administrative structure and the nature of its leadership:** It is not the same in a city like Medellín, whose mayor's office controls the utility companies under a single administrative structure, as in a city like Santiago, where governance is divided between an governor appointed by the central government and the mayors of the neighborhoods, who are elected by the citizens through voting, and where the resources of the former are provided by the central government, while the latter manage municipal budgets with different sources of income, none of which is, by the way, a company.

That is why we (the authors of these notebooks) are persuaded that the best scale to enable acceleration of the cultural change we need through Extreme Collaboration is THE CITY, and that is why in 2017 we decided to transform the pilots of Rio CAN B, in Brazil; Santiago CAN B, in Chile; and Mendoza CAN B in, Argentina into the basis for developing a global movement called Cities CAN B.

In the remainder of this chapter we will present an overview of what we do in Cities CAN B, and then focus, in the other 4 notebooks, on

the strategies for extreme collaboration that we believe constitute the main contribution that Cities CAN B can make to those of us committed to pushing for the cultural changes that humanity needs.



## THE CITIES CAN B PATH

Cities CAN B is a collaborative movement co-led, so far, by: Sistema B International Foundation, which promotes B Corps and other economic actors in Latin America, aiming at building a new economy in which success and financial gains incorporate social and environmental well-being; and Gulliver, an innovation agency certified as a B Corp that specializes in cultivating collaborative ecosystems; with the support of the BMW Foundation, which promotes the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations' 2030 Agenda.

Cities CAN B seeks to mobilize hundreds of thousands of people (citizens and organizations) to work together towards the SDGs.

Our work is about bringing together the different actors in a city to create a shared purpose through a strategy we call intertwining stakeholders. We will discuss this strategy in more detail in the third notebook.

Through a collaborative, multi-sectorial approach, and decentralized governance, we seek to ensure the participation of all, without the need for them to agree in advance on a specific plan or roadmap. Instead, each participant (state institutions, businesses, activists, citizen organizations, universities, etc.) contributes to the common purpose with their own efforts.

Thus, the paths to action are multiple and varied, all under a previously shared common purpose. Each member of the governance structure or strategic partner can pursue their own objectives and benefit in their own way, as long as it is in tune with the agreed common purpose. Our team has validated this massively collaborative approach over the last ten years to accelerate the growth of innovation ecosystems across Latin America.

In Annex I we explain in more detail how Cities CAN B delivers its interventions.



## V. THE 4 EXTREME COLLABORATION STRATEGIES OF CITIES CAN B



While implementing Cities CAN B in five cities, in Latin America and Europe<sup>26</sup>, we have identified four extreme collaboration strategies that have proven to be successful. Simply put, these strategies, which we always combine, have allowed us to accelerate cultural and social changes that for many observers and ecosystem participants seemed impossible.

In this notebook we only present a brief summary of such strategies, but we will explore each of them in more depth throughout the collection

## STRATEGY 1: CULTIVATING AN EPIC COMMON PURPOSE

There is a first step in any process of deep and lasting social and cultural change: building a "we", not in opposition to a "them", but rather by forging a sense of belonging, similar to what Mandela did in his government when he brought the white people on board in the political project of building "one country". This allows us to align and mobilize the necessary hearts and minds to bring about transformation. This sense of belonging is built, among other ways, by articulating and cultivating a common purpose, i.e. a narrative that gives meaning to the "we" and to a vision of the future shared by those who are part of that "we".

These things are not done separately. There is no unidirectional causal relationship between the "we" and the vision of the future. They occur simultaneously and reinforce each other.

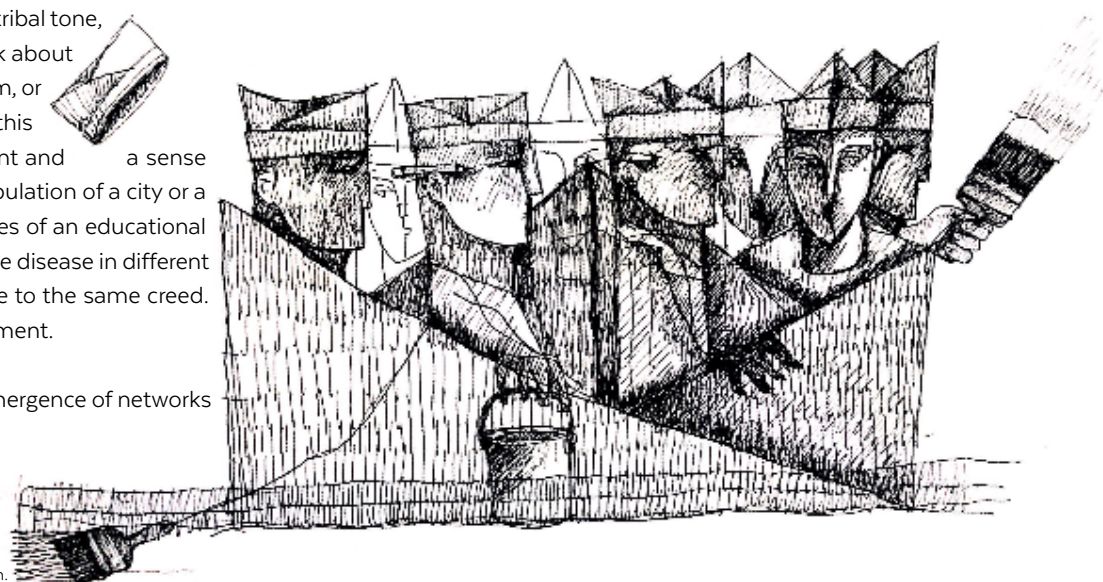
Traditionally, the "we" that we think of, has a tribal tone, and sometimes the term tribal is used to talk about communities that embody xenophobia, racism, or some kind of internal dogma of faith. But in this notebook we use it to emphasize attachment and a sense of belonging. These "we" can include the population of a city or a neighborhood. Or the students and graduates of an educational institution. Or those who suffer from the same disease in different corners of the world. Or those who subscribe to the same creed. Or those who participate in the same movement.

But part of what we need to look at, is the emergence of networks

and movements with fuzzy edges, where the "we" is nourished by purpose, articulated in an epic narrative that in turn, gives a sense of unity to that "we".

Ouishare network is a beautiful example, made up of professionals from different countries who collaborate, without hierarchy or institutionalism, to promote the collaborative economy.

In the second notebook we will show what we have learned about the relationship between the "we" and the epic, and how a narrative that embodies and mobilizes the purposes of a "we" can be designed and articulated.



<sup>26</sup> Rio de Janeiro, Mendoza, Santiago, Asunción, and Edinburgh.

## STRATEGY 2: INTERTWINING STAKEHOLDERS

As we have seen with the global efforts around the climate challenge, it is often the case that in seeking to mobilize change we find it difficult to seek absolute consensus on both the goals and the agenda for change. And we often fail when we persist in attempting such complete and total alignment.

To approach the problem differently, we have to resort to empathy and start from a key premise: each person has their own interests and concerns. And these are legitimate, no matter how inappropriate they may seem to others. If we accept other people's concerns and interests as legitimate, even if they conflict with our own interests and concerns, then we can put everything on the table and start working.

Of course, there is a limit to the concerns and interests that we can consider as legitimate, that limit is captured by the "Popper's paradox of tolerance": tolerance must include everyone except the intolerant. A society that is tolerant of the intolerant can potentially be destroyed by the latter. The Weimar Republic was tolerant of Hitler and his followers, who benefited from this and came to power through democratic mechanisms. In our case, when faced with the challenge of producing extreme collaboration, we seek to include all participants in the community, except those who would seek to destroy it, or destroy the basis of coexistence that makes collaboration possible. This opens up a space of ambiguity that is not always trivial to work with, because in the heat of political tensions, it can be tempting for some to argue that other people's interests put the community at risk. This complexity is inherent in the work of bringing together individuals who have tensions with each other but, ultimately, adherence to the common purpose must be the overriding criteria.

Under this logic, the focus of our efforts is to get some people to agree on some things, for some time, instead of agreeing on everything all the time. And out of those agreements, come concrete actions that bring about changes that contribute to the overall purpose.

This intertwining is done over and over again, around a wide variety of specific goals and actions. As we find these small synergies, we will end up cultivating trust between us that will allow us to dream of common horizons, more and more ambitious every day.

This is precisely the modus operandi behind the Climate Ambition Alliance, which we will analyze in greater detail in the following notebooks.

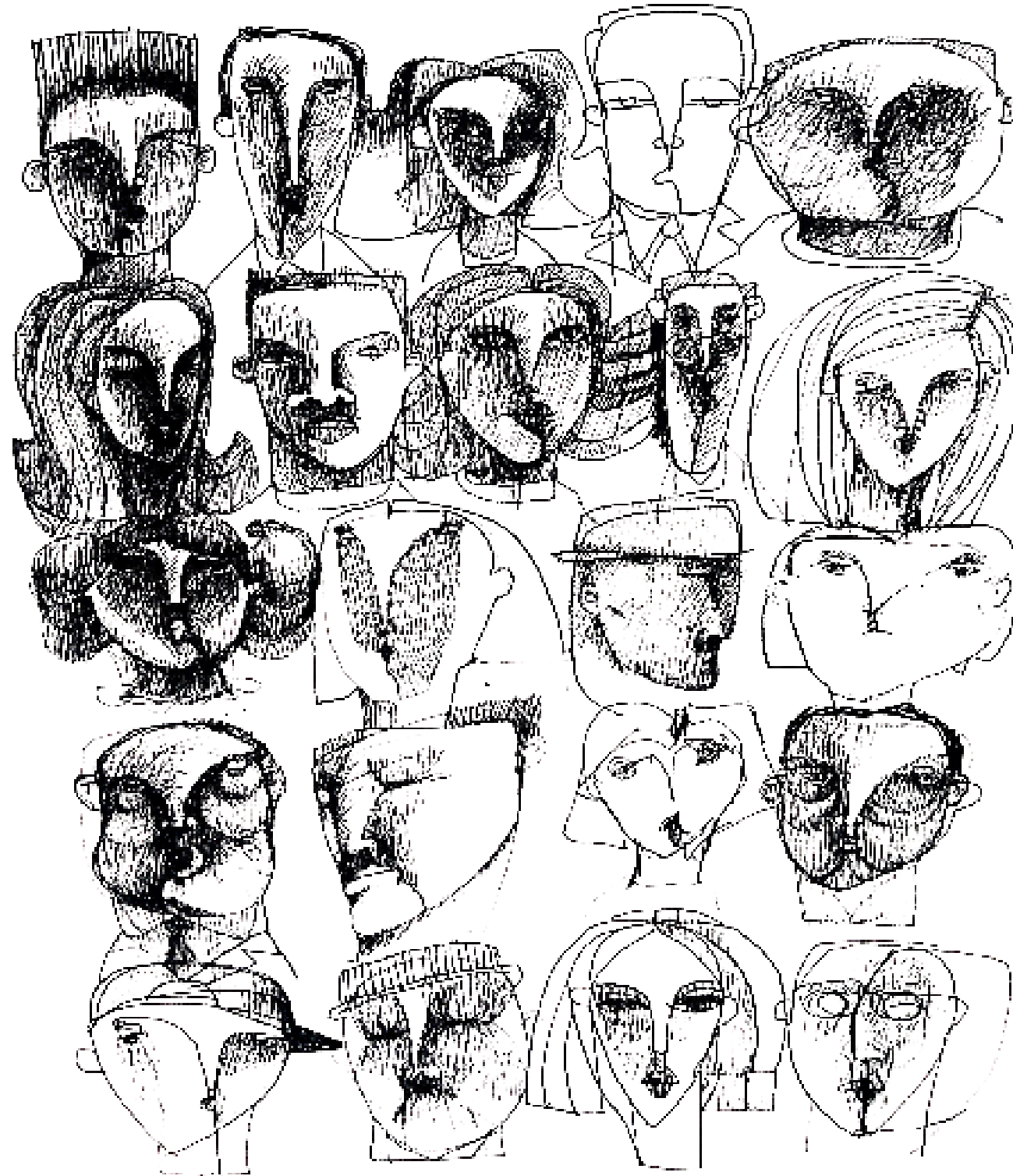
In addition, in the third notebook we will review in detail how we can design the conditions for intertwining to occur: the political spaces, the architecture of the talks, the spaces for agreement, the convening, etc.

### STRATEGY 3: ENGAGING BUSINESSES AS ANOTHER DRIVER OF CHANGE

We have become accustomed to expecting governments and civil society organizations to lead the search for solutions to our collective challenges. However, in recent years, it has become increasingly clear that the private world has a central role to play. Not only because companies such as Facebook or Google have far more resources than many countries combined, but also because they play a central role in shaping the world we live in. Some private companies have powers that most governments do not have, to the extent that they can determine the course of a country and undermine democracy, which implies a political, historical, and social responsibility that is increasingly visible and demanded by citizens.

But at the same time, business movements such as Conscious Capitalism, B Corps, the B Team, and even the World Economic Forum are now talking about the leading role that businesses can play – and are playing – in achieving the SDGs. Designing change processes today without involving the private sector is not only a historical mistake, but also implies subtracting one of the players that can have the greatest impact.

In the forth Notebook, we will discuss how the slogan #BusinessAsAForceForGood, that point to how the flexibility, energy, and resources of the business world can be put at the service of the interests of the community and the planet, can be accomplished.



### STRATEGY 4: PROMOTING CITIZEN'S COLLECTIVE IMPACT

So far, citizens have developed great strength in demanding the changes needed to secure dignity, peace, justice, environmental awareness, tolerance, equality, or well-being. Across the world it seems to be true that citizens are drawing on a growing power to march, organize, and assert their demands forcefully. And that is very good, because in a way it is a manifestation of how power is being distributed and how individuals are participating more actively in their own destinies.

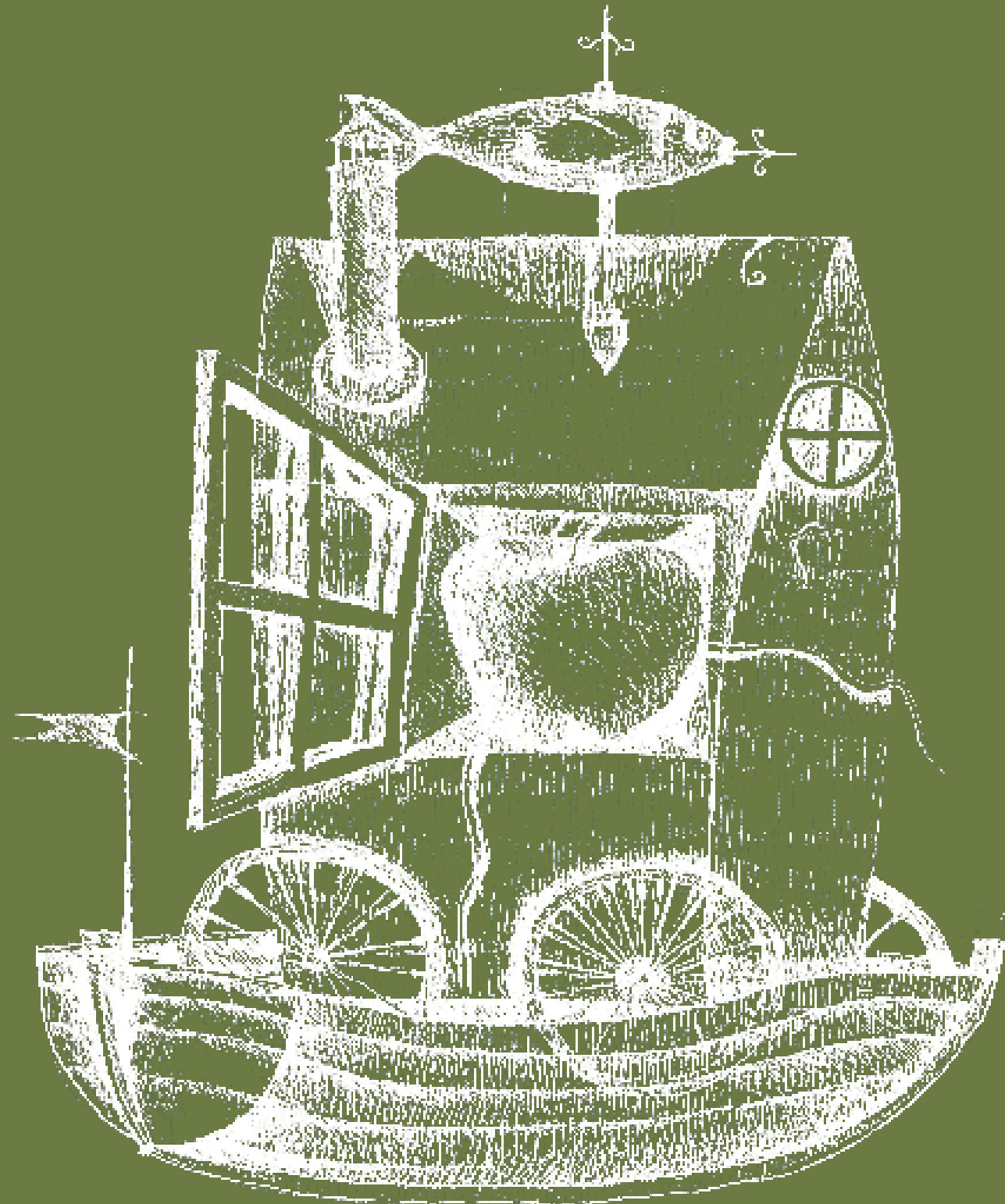
But we believe that marching, denouncing, and demanding are only part of the job. Because all these actions imply demands to an "other" that must take charge of carrying out the changes demanded. Usually, that "other" is the state, or the private sector.

We argue that this approach to citizen action is inherited from a world governed by representatives. A world where it was not possible for citizens to participate directly in coordinating their actions and resources to achieve improvements in their living conditions. But today's citizens have a relatively new capacity: precisely that of leading change directly and not only through their representatives. This is a key to the 21st century: it is no longer a matter of changing our rulers so that they in turn change the world, but of acting in coordination to be and to bring about the changes we want. Just think of a simple example: if we want to stop consuming plastic bottles and stop throwing a million of them into the sea every minute, we – all of us – can stop buying them. This seems simple (although it is not), but it is possible to think about it, and to do it, because today people can talk and coordinate with each other in a distributed way, all of us with all of us. Twenty years ago, that goal and that conversation were utopian.

This new power, which needs to be cultivated, is infinite.

In the fifth notebook we will not only see what this power consists of and where it manifests itself, but also how to promote it, how to channel it and how to turn it into a lever for accelerating change.





## VI. CONCLUSION

We have said that, as it's clear to most people, humanity faces enormous challenges with respect to the well-being of the population and even its ability to survive in the long term. These challenges range from ensuring that each individual has the possibility of a dignified life with access to the services needed to grow and develop, to ensuring that the planet's environmental conditions remain favorable to human life as we know it. These challenges have been articulated by the UN in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

We have said that the governance available to our species to address these challenges is insufficient: it does not have the capacity to mobilize humanity's resources to bring about the necessary changes at the speed needed to prevent some of the most catastrophic scenarios. Measured against their own timelines, the SDGs are not on track to be achieved.

For much of the world's population, threats are approaching in ways they cannot perceive. We are the real frogs in a pot of hot water that gradually increases in temperature. Because of our biological makeup and our history, most human beings do not possess the capacity to look at the world and our species as a whole. Also, we are not sensitive to problems such as climate change, the widespread lack of access to minimum health services, the profound gaps in education or the famine that strikes a part of our fellow human beings. Finally, we seem insensitive to the generations to come, whose natural resources we are plundering, thereby compromising their chances of building dignified and fulfilling lives.

We have also said that in this scenario, which might seem hopeless, there are important advances in our capacity for collective action, which is possible through massive collaborative practices that were unthinkable a few years ago. Information and communication technologies have opened up mind-blowing opportunities for us to collectively do things that might seem impossible. Greta, at 16, showed us this by building a platform of political power that allowed her to teach the world's leaders on climate change a lesson. But even more, it is being demonstrated by millions of people who are responsibly and systematically collaborating even with those they might consider their enemies to drive profound transformations in

their territories. We have called the practices that make this possible "extreme collaboration".

We have reviewed the phenomenon of extreme collaboration in order to better understand it. And we have seen how it obeys some basic principles:

- Human beings share and tell ourselves stories about the past, the present and the future, which determine our way of being in the world and our possibilities for action. Producing collaboration with others involves having common stories that provide the background for practices, symbols, and rituals that make large-scale collective action possible. We call this set of elements the epic common purpose.
- Driving the major changes required, involves bringing together the capacity for action of as many stakeholders as possible, despite their differences and opposing interests. Common purpose, articulated in the epic, enables this. But to really achieve this, stakeholders must intertwine, i.e. seek collaborative spaces that allow some of them to agree on specific plans, for limited periods of time, to collaborate on projects and initiatives that address their concerns in the context of the common purpose. Rather than trying to agree on grand plans all the time. For whatever challenge we have, there is no single plan, we don't look for it, we don't try to agree on it. The rigor is put into sticking to the epic, which serves as a context for freedom of action for all stakeholders.
- Just as national states and multilateral institutions have the capacities and resources to contribute to the achievement of the SDGs, private companies, with their dynamism, their capacity to innovate, and their flexibility, also have the capacity to make crucial contributions. These worlds, which many see as separate and even opposing, are complementary in the work that humanity requires. Disregarding the capabilities of business in this collective challenge means overlooking an ultimate factor.

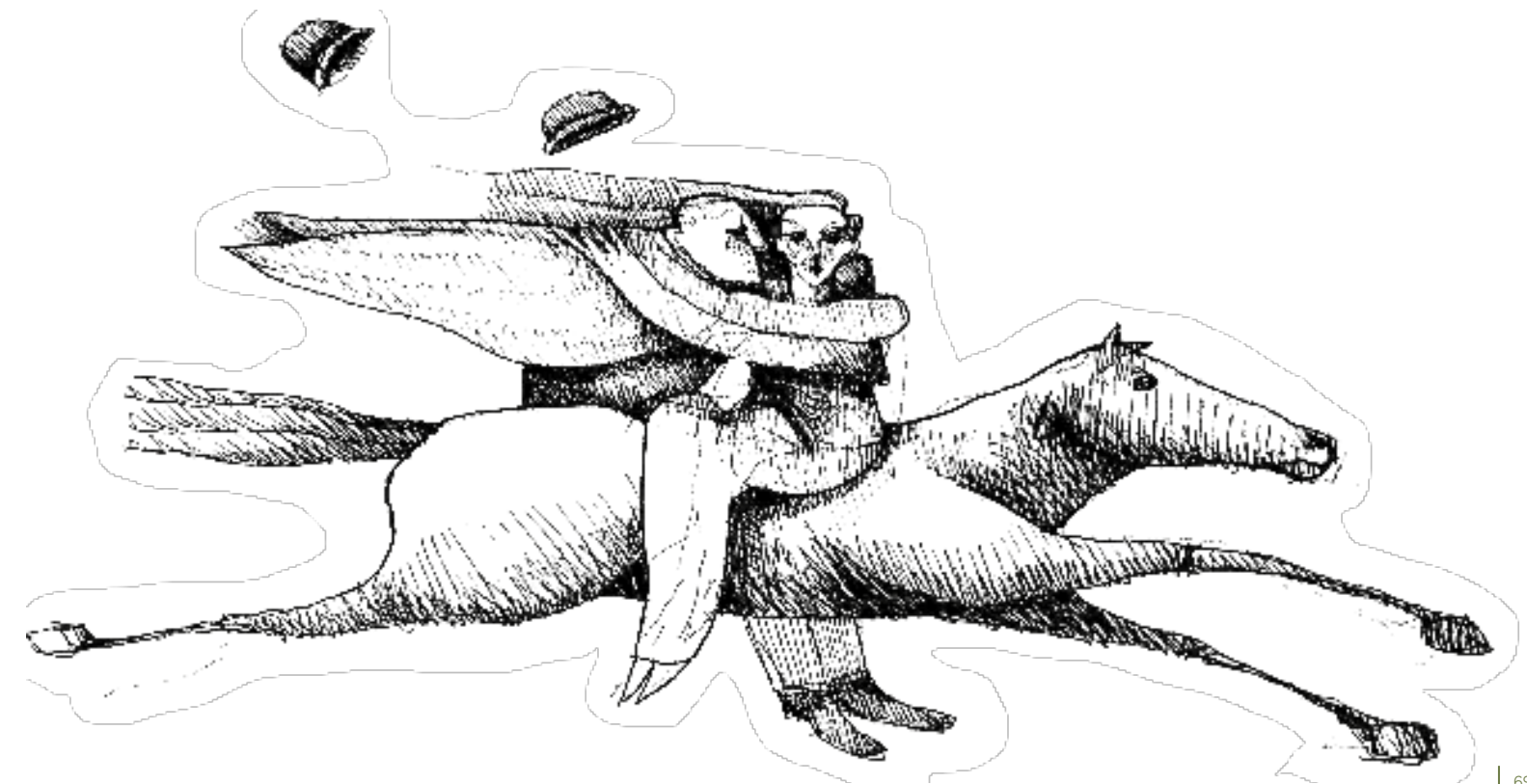
- The citizens of the world, for their part, have a capacity for action that has grown exponentially since the massification of information technologies. The possibility of real-time communication from mobile devices, the enormous power of social networks and the massive and low-cost capacity to produce content instantaneously (video, photographs, texts) have given citizens unlimited power compared to what their parents or grandparents had, only a few decades ago. These capabilities are key to the changes the world needs, and are already in motion to achieve the SDGs.

For each of these principles, we have discovered a set of strategies that, in the light of our own experiences and those we have observed in different change processes around the world, have proven to be effective in producing extreme collaboration. These strategies are the subject of each of the forthcoming notebooks.

Finally, we have said that while there are multiple levers for the SDGs, there is one that we believe is key: cities. Like the UN authorities, we believe that the battle for sustainability will be won or lost in cities.

This transformation, which we believe has already begun and is manifested in the efforts of millions of people from institutions, businesses, civil society organizations, universities and R&D&I centers, can be accelerated through extreme collaborative strategies.

For this reason, we have given life to the Cities CAN B movement, which seeks to accelerate transformation in cities.





## VII. CITIES CAN B CANVAS



The Cities CAN B Canvas is designed to be used collectively in workshops in which the governance members of a City CAN B are participating. The canvas is centered on four questions that reflect the four strategies of this series of notebooks on extreme collaboration.

### CULTIVATING AN EPIC COMMON PURPOSE

The first set of questions concerns the epic narrative. We seek to collectively generate a way of talking about our common purpose that is grounded in the collective past and therefore resonates deeply with the city's population, but at the same time captures and gives shape to the practices we have in the present and builds a collective vision of the future.

The exercise is as follows:

1. In a first round, the workshop participants have to answer the question: what part of the past do we want to rescue and highlight in order to cultivate an inclusive "we" that calls for collective care of the city?
2. In a second round the participants have to answer the question: what part of the actions we are taking today (the processes, procedures, habits and customs we have) are relevant to be highlighted and put at the center in order to strengthen the "we" we want to cultivate?
3. And in a third round we have to answer the question: what is the future that could convene the greatest number of stakeholders to dream of a more inclusive, more participatory city that advances the local SDG agenda?

### INTERTWINING STAKEHOLDERS

The second set of questions refers to which actors we have already engaged and which others we could incorporate into this collective initiative. The idea is to be able to join forces. Surely there are already people in the city who are moving forward committed to a particular challenge, be it gender equality, or global warming, or eliminating poverty, or caring for the oceans, or reforesting the city. We will find activists of different kinds, social enterprises that are taking the initiative, large companies that, as part of their policy, are already taking action in these areas. We will also find foundations that have spent years working on some of these challenges and, finally, we will find different local or national government bodies that are working towards the same goals.

The exercise is as follows:

1. The workshop participants identify the stakeholders who are already present and define who we intend to convene. In each case, we must ask ourselves: what elements do we have in common with them (objectives, practices, spaces for action), who can help us find a way to reach people who are not directly part of our network?
2. With the answers, we not only map the stakeholders, but also the synergies that may exist among the different existing initiatives in the city.

### ENGAGING BUSINESS AS ANOTHER DRIVER OF CHANGE

The third set of questions concerns the involvement of the business world. Change in the city without the contribution of the businesses will only be slower and more difficult. There are many companies that are already making a contribution and the sum of these contributions could be articulated around a City CAN B. The challenge is to find them and bring them together.

The exercise works as follows:

1. Participants identify the companies that are already involved and those that we could get involved.
2. In addition to this, business associations like chambers of commerce that already have a commitment to the SDGs in our city are identified.
3. Participants define which of the identified companies might be interested in participating in a process to assess their socio-environmental impact with a commitment to improve it.
4. Finally, participants identify companies that could help design a massive initiative of collective impact (MICI). This is how we call initiatives that allow thousands of citizens to collaborate in a single project that promotes a specific SDG, producing visible impacts.

### PROMOTING CITIZEN'S COLLECTIVE IMPACT

The fourth set of questions concerns the involvement of citizens. Citizens today have an extraordinary power to bring about change. One way of doing this is by marching against what is happening, in a confrontational way; but another additional way is taking collective responsibility for promoting initiatives that help solve the challenges that concern them, and it is this dimension that we are trying to discover at this stage.

The exercise works as follows:

1. Participants identify collective actions that could bring together the largest possible number of stakeholders. This includes civil society organizations, movements, groups of various kinds, and individuals.
2. They then identify initiatives that could leverage funding, both public and private.
3. Finally, but most importantly, participants define initiatives that could bring thousands of people together to participate collaboratively in an MICI.

The idea of the canvas is to enable a collective exercise that allows participants to answer the main questions about the strategy to be followed to produce extreme collaboration in their city.

In a second instance, they can work in more detail on the specific canvases for each of the four strategies, eventually involving new participants.



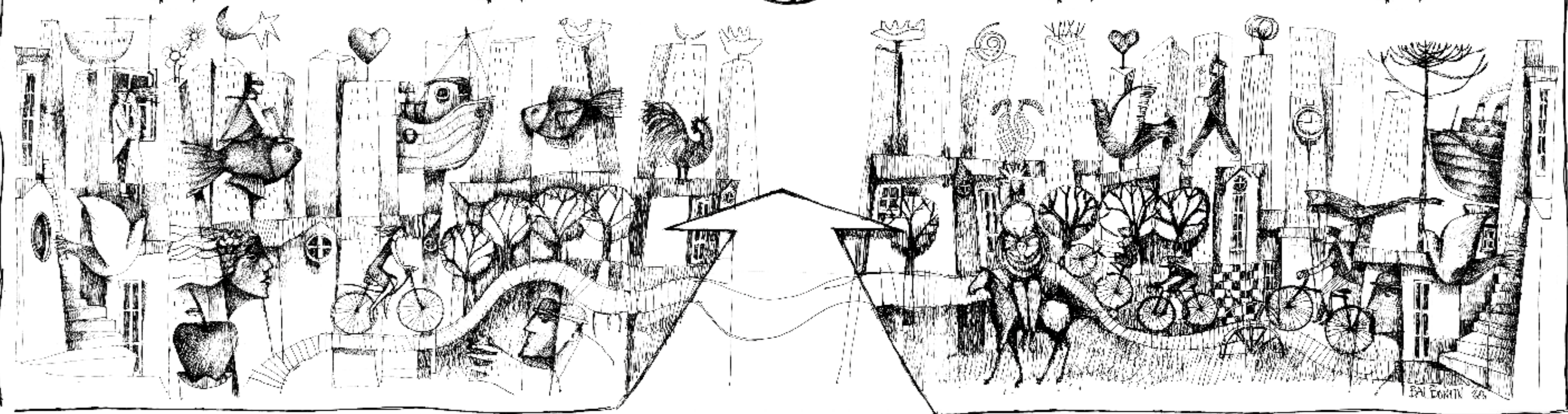
**CULTIVATING AN EPIC COMMON PURPOSE**

**INTERTWINING STAKEHOLDERS**

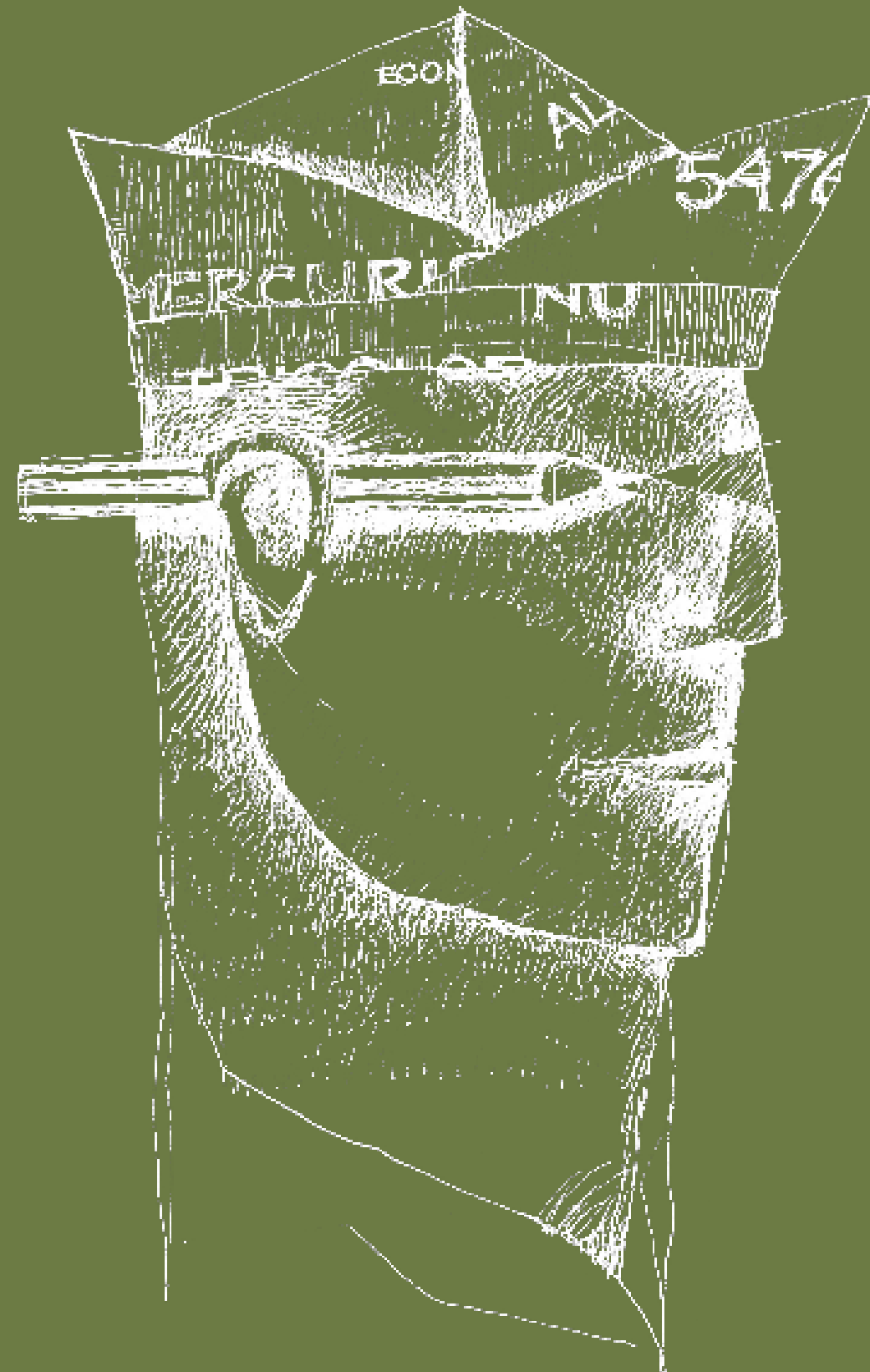
**CITIES CAN B**  
**CIUDADES + B**

**ENGAGING BUSINESS AS ANOTHER DRIVER OF CHANGE**

**PROMOTING CITIZEN'S COLLECTIVE IMPACT**



BAL EORTIX 2015



ANNEXES



## ANNEX I: HOW CITIES CAN B WORKS

Via its multistakeholder governance, a City CAN B, works collaboratively, and according to its own local priorities by:

### Governance:

Creating a public-private multistakeholder governance with 20 to 40 different actors, that meets on a monthly basis, to make sure these stakeholders build a bond, co-create win-win collective initiatives and remain committed in the long run to their mutual collaboration around the SDGs of their city.

### Citizens:

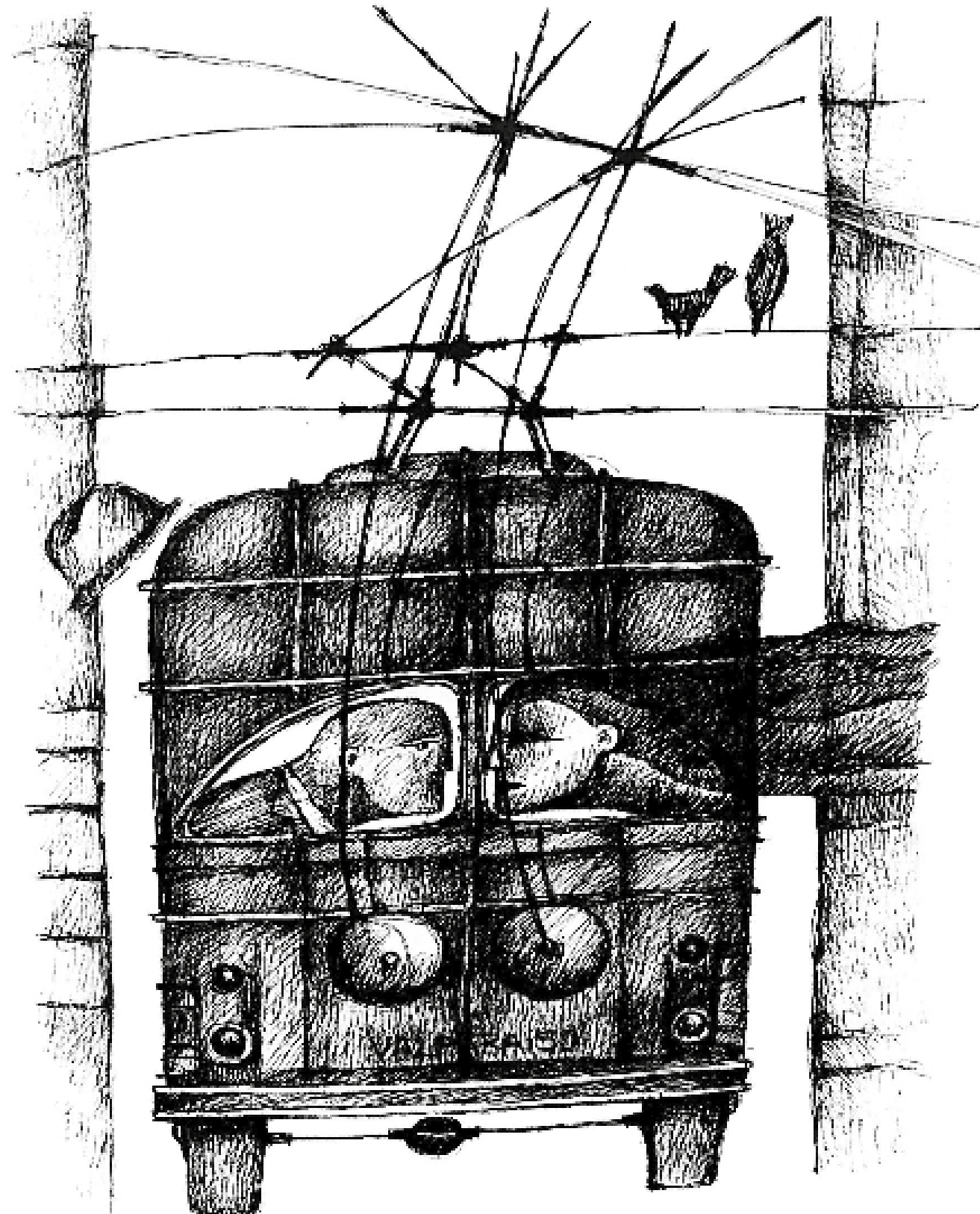
Involving as many neighbors as possible (citizens, companies, NGO's, universities) and turning them into stakeholders, making sure they become aware and responsible for their social and environmental footprint and commit to the relevant SDGs of their city.

### Companies:

Inviting the companies of each city, to track and improve continuously their social and environmental impact through the SDG Action Manager (UN's Global Compact and B Lab online tool for measuring and aligning business' contribution towards the SDGs) and/or through the B Impact Assessment (platform used by +80,000 companies and +3,300 B Corps around the world to assess and benchmark their social and environmental impact)

### Initiatives:

Making sure this multistakeholder governance is transformed into action, producing collaboratively, what we have called Massive Initiatives of Collective Impact (MICI), allowing thousands of citizens to participate in the SDG agenda, e.g., local festival focused on positive change, construction of community gardens, reforestation of degraded areas, public artistic interventions related to SDG local challenges, river cleaning, etc.



### Laboratory:

Implementing a "CITY LAB", a series of workshops focused on capacity building for companies that have measured their impact, and have committed to continuously improve their social and environmental impact. The objective is to create a vibrant community of companies that collaborate and support each other on the journey of becoming better companies for their cities.

### Youths:

Invite young neighbors (18 to 30 years old) to join an international movement called "Entrepreneurs CAN B", an online collaborative journey with the objective of engaging them in the social and environmental challenges of their own city, either through social entrepreneurship, or collective actions for positive change.

### Public politics:

Create local legislative frameworks, laws, and regulatory structures at the service of the common good, such as: MENDOZA CAN B triple impact public procurement, and articulate a group of B lawyers, legislators, and councilors who seek to create new regulatory structures that favor the development of a positive impact local ecosystem.

### Market:

Create local triple impact market dynamics such as impact business rounds alongside with impact investors to promote and nurture impact business ecosystems.

### Academy:

Create inter-university alliances that are able to capture and generate knowledge on positive impact market-driven solutions and embed purpose-driven practices into business and law programs, hence, preparing a new generation of leaders that will advance a new economy. (i.e. AMI - Academia Mendoza Impacta via Academia B)

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## ANNEX III: OUR SPONSORS

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Tomás has a bachelor's degree in Business, a master's degree in Digital Communication. He lectures classes on economic innovation in Brazil and abroad. He is a Responsible Leader of the BMW Foundation global network, member of WWF Global Markets Institute Thought Leader Group, member of the network Tendrel Global, and member of the network Well Being Economy Alliance (WEAll). Co-founder of the Global Shapers' Hubs in Rio de Janeiro and Porto Alegre.

He is passionate about cosmology, evolutionary biology, and Vedanta studies, practicing meditation and swimming in the ocean. His work focuses on the creation and expansion of organizations that work as a network and promote an economy focused on human development and integrated with nature.

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