

## **Model Earth: An Invitation**

(online: [www.modeearth.org/modeearth.html](http://www.modeearth.org/modeearth.html))

to participate in creating of an interactive model of an ideal, ecologically and socially sustainable Earth, a model that would be being designed by every and anyone, a model that would portray an Earth possessing optimal living conditions for all those who share it for the purpose of there being a universal reference that would be helpful in any projects concerning the future of any social entity--from a locally based community, to the whole Earth.

### **Why Model Earth?**

It is obvious from reality that the hierarchical forms of government that are in existence now no longer can cope with the increasing magnitude of problems that humanity is forced to face. Since any attempts, so far, (in the form of reforms, revolutions, etc.) to improve humankind's lot failed to achieve any significant results, perhaps a new approach should be considered.

The main reason that our current way of dealing with our problems doesn't work is that we forever are trying to fix problems that originate in our past mistakes (mostly, since most problems that humankind experiences are human made; much smaller proportion of problems that we have to deal with are truly "natural"), without knowing exactly what the ideal state of things in the world should be. The world is being shaped constantly to no one's satisfaction with our fixes; our fixes are not perfect since there is no consensus what this "perfect" should be like.

In order that solutions to humankind's problems are satisfactory, we should collectively decide what the ideal state of the world should be, so that there is a definite direction (towards the ideal, and not just away from problems to parts unknown--hoping that we arrive at a better place, not knowing what this "better place" should look like) for our actions--only then our "fixes" to any of our problems would be effective!

It is easy to define one's own, individual goals. But how to define the goals for a group of people, or for all the people of the entire world? One possible way could be to define those collective goals by constructing models of the goals with the participation of all the people who are to share those goals together. There is a need for a better future of the entire humanity--such a future can be good only if all of those who have a stake in this future collaborate on designing it.

There are already many people with good ideas about what a better future should be like for a better future actually to start happening, one could think. However, most of these ideas (on the whole) are not synchronized, and in many instances these ideas are quite vague, untested properly against all the other ideas concerning our collective future, and most of these ideas address only very superficial concerns generally. Thus, even though it would seem that a great deal is being done for a better future, on the whole the situation in the world continues becoming worse. Many of those ideas are often contrary to each other, and conflicts might emerge when those ideas are in the state of realization--something that the modeling would try to prevent by resolving any possible discrepancies among all such ideas within a model, before any conflicts could develop in reality, with far greater efficiency than, probably, any discourse, or any diplomatic processes of today could ever hope to accomplish.

It could also be said that a kind of a model of a better Earth future already exists in the minds of all those who think about what their future and the future of the world should be like, but for any expedient and practical purposes this model that might exist in the general world consciousness is too vague and is not explicit enough for any clear reference, something that Model Earth would surpass by being there actually accessible for any purposes of reference, discourse, and discussion.

Model Earth would be co-created by virtually anyone, from anywhere on Earth, who would like to match one's own ideas of what their ideal future should look like with the ideas of everyone else. At present a very few people try to co-ordinate their ideas about their future with the ideas of all others.

The process of modeling of our collective future would not be based on any arbitrary notions, however, but based on all the knowledge that there would be available of any pertinent issues involved in the modeling. From their involvement in the modeling process it would be obvious to the participants what ideas that they might have about their future would be viable, and what ideas would not be so--this interactive model would be the best educational tool available, assessing participants' ideas in terms of justifiability with the current state of knowledge about the Earth, the human society, and with the ideas/wishes of all other participants.

The advantage of using this modeling tool over the current way of deciding the Earth future would lay in its being impartial and non-partisan--neither suppressing, nor favoring anyone's ideas over those of others. This model that would be being created on ongoing basis (because knowledge and ideas evolve constantly) would be authoritative not because of possessing any executive authority, but because of its portraying most realistically what the optimal state of Earth could be, according to current state of knowledge and being based on the realistic wishes of virtually all who would chose to use this modeling tool.

This modeling tool could be used in arbitrating of most, if not all, conflicts--it would be impartial. Think of this model as a universal "ombudsman" that would be authoritative because presenting an Earth with optimal conditions for all life--a model that could always be disputed and improved upon.

This interactive model could co-ordinate the efforts and enhance the scope of perspective and efficiency of the many existing groups that aim to improve living on Earth (NGOs and others), and would allow sharing of all of their available knowledge databases. This model would be possible to be created on existing computers linked by the Internet. The technology that would allow linking of a virtually unlimited number of computers together to form a supercomputer already exists (one of the terms used is "distributed computing"), and would not demand any outlay of much more than volunteer energy.

## **The Need for Designing the Future Collaboratively: To Whom the Future of the Earth Might Concern.**

(online: [www.modelearth.org/intro.html](http://www.modelearth.org/intro.html))

I propose that the differences that there exist among all our ideas--ideas of all who share this planet--about what our common existence on this planet should ideally be like be resolved by any what-so-ever expedient, appropriate means first: by modeling (computer modeling, or any other kind of modeling) at the global level, round table style discussions at the community level, before those differences resolve in real life, causing real waste of lives, resources, and time in the real world.

Once there would be a clear idea of what we all agree that our common existence in this world should look like, only then it would be possible to achieve this commonly held ideal.

This contrasts with the way in use now when we are mostly trying to improve our existence in this world by forever fixing the infinite problems stemming from our past mistakes that plague us, and usually causing new problems to arise with our fixes--never knowing well what kind of existence we are trying to achieve, and therefore never achieving any kind of existence that would be fully acceptable by anyone.

### **Why There is a Need for Designing the Ideal Earth Co-operatively:**

Normally we sort out the differences that we have about how our collective, social lives should be conducted in real time/space with the familiar results: our collective existence on this planet is becoming worse in many vital aspects.

We have to find a way of effectively resolving our differences before those differences start being sorted out in real life.

It is imperative that we find an expedient way of collectively deciding what kind of a common existence on this planet we all want--we have to have a collectively shared "vision" of what we want the Earth to be.

This "vision" (Meadows 2004), or a "choice" (Fritz 1984) has to be based on what there, in the ideal reality, we would really like to have, without considering whether this would be "realistic", "possible", or any such considerations for the nonce. It has to be ideal; as ideal as possible--to the point that one could not improve on the vision any further, as if (Fritz 1984).

Only after this, once a vision is formulated in as minute detail as possible (Fritz 1984), would the finding of ways of how to achieve this vision start. It would not do to start looking for such ways without the vision not being fully defined, or at least as well defined that we would recognize this vision should we encounter it (Fritz 1984, paraphrased again).

It has to be understood very firmly that creating a vision of what one wants--I paraphrase Robert Fritz in his *The Path of Least Resistance* (Fritz 1984) frequently without always acknowledging this--is in no way forecasting the future! Sometimes this is not clear--it means deciding on a goal to be striven for consciously, not waiting for a vision to descent upon us from above (or wherever from)!

This approach is very different from the hit-or-miss, band-aid superficial approach that we,

the humanity, have been using so far in trying to improve our conditions for life on Earth, with the results clearly observable--increasing environmental and societal crises that have no precedents in humankind's existence.

So far we have mostly been responding to problems as they occur, with the result that we have been able to successfully deal with some of the problems, but, on the whole, although we achieve a lot of "progress", we usually manage to create even more difficulties in this way due to our not dealing with the root causes of most of our problems.

Most of us know what kind of a world we would like to live in. And to make sure that we end up living in a world that we all would like to live in, we have to reconcile any possible differences that there might be among our individual ideas of what the world that we would like to live in should be like before we start striving for it--just to make sure that we, each of us, are not striving for different objectives! As much as we share the same place, the same planet together, that much we have to share our planning for our common co-existence, our common future together.

We have to collectively create a model of the world that we would like to live in in order to have a "visible", a referable to portrayal of the commonly designed ideal, and while we all cooperate on constructing the model, we all work out all the differences that there might be among our ideas of what our ideal world should look like as we progress on construction of the design.

Of course, constructing the model of an ideal world would never be finished--it would be continually improved upon--but we would start eventually getting the idea of what it is that we are all agreeing on, and we would start working towards the ideal world in real time and space as soon as the design would be clear enough to permit this.

This forever ongoing co-operation of us all on creating of an ideal Earth agreeable to all would be far better than the way of resolving of our differences on occasions, then going our separate ways, and then getting into difficulties with each other again--over and over again, as we are accustomed to doing "normally".

While continuously trying to improve the model of all of us existing together, we would spot potential trouble spots long before those would develop in real life to cause real problems--an improvement over the cycles of violence we adhere to presently! It would be dealing with problems before those occur--not after problems occur!

It is very important that everybody would have an access to the process of creating of the model, so that anybody's ideas of the ideal that might differ from the ideas of others would get sorted out in the model, rather than waiting for those differences to be sorted out in real life, causing real damage!

With the free access of everybody to the modeling/designing of the ideal world, everybody would be able to and forced to learn what they would need to learn "on the job"--first by taking a part in designing of the ideal, then by co-operating on actually achieving the ideal in real life--the best possible education for anyone, an education that would relate to our existence on this planet directly.

The ongoing designing of the world would become a permanent feature in everybody's life. It would be a feature that would be consciously encultured into the social/cultural fabric of the

society from generation to generation seamlessly, and thus (I hope) would prevent any future possible reversal to our current way of conducting politics. After all--resolving problems, differences, controversies, and complaints before those could engender real life damage would, at all times, be clearly superior to any other ways of living.

It would fundamentally differ from the way "politics" is being done in our world now-a-days in that, that it would not be personalities fighting for partisan and personal power; it would be ideas that would "compete" for inclusion into the ideal world design; only ideas that would best fit in with all other components of the design, and with all that we know about ourselves and about the world would be included in the design, to be replaced when better ideas would be submitted. It would never be necessary to know who is behind which idea!

This imagining of what the ideal Earth should be like should start on the global level and from there the design would be putting each local community into the global context, because were it otherwise, in the end, during the process of each community's becoming what the whichever community might consider "ideal" might interfere with what other communities might consider "ideal"--they would be wise to check on the global design just to prevent any future conflicts. In this case the "think globally, act locally" would have its rightful application. In practice this thinking and acting would occur simultaneously.

Please read "Designing a Lasting Peace Together" ( [www.modelearth.org/peace.html](http://www.modelearth.org/peace.html) ), where the need for collaboratively designing the future of the world could be seen best.

Please, also see "The Ideal Sustainable Earth Model: Proposal." - ( [www.modelearth.org/idea.html](http://www.modelearth.org/idea.html) ).

#### **N.B.**

The concept of designing the future collectively described in these pages owes its existence to Mahayana philosophy and to ideas presented in *The Path of Least Resistance* (Fritz 1984) by Robert Fritz, which I paraphrase and quote from often, not always necessarily acknowledging this.

### **Designing a Lasting World Peace Together.**

online: [www.modelearth.org/peace.html](http://www.modelearth.org/peace.html)

Over the ages most people always desired to live in a permanent state of peace; they prayed for it, imagined it, worked for it continuously since time immemorial. Lasting "Peace on Earth" is the goal of many.

The reason that, so far, no lasting peace in the world materialized yet is due to our (sometimes great) differences in what we mean when we say "peace on Earth". Since we do not have a unified, common idea of the concept, "peace on Earth" can never happen. Instead we always end up fighting for our version of "peace", and we wonder why any lasting "Peace on Earth" never really comes about.

Knowing that every time of peace in human history ended in a war, what should "Peace on Earth" look like, so it would not result in a war again?

Unless we can answer this question, we can never achieve real "Peace on Earth".

We should learn how to imagine, in as much detail as possible, what would constitute a real "Peace on Earth", and then, since we each have different concept of the idea, we should learn how to reconcile all our differences in order to arrive at a unified idea of what "Peace on Earth" should be, because only one version of by all shared reality can manifest at a time.

We have to ensure that our reality is one that would be accepted by all of us who are to experience it--hence we have to first "design" our common reality to be shared by all of us in models (or using what-so-ever expedient means: "gedanken experiments", round-table discussions, etc.); we have to see that we like it, and then we set out to materialize it coherently together, cooperating closely and enthusiastically.

Unifying and reconciling of all the different ideas that we might have about the future of the Earth in a model (or using whatever appropriate means), and then working towards this unified ideal would prevent conflicts from happening in real life, since, after all, wars happen because people go to war so that peace happens their way.

So that we do indeed arrive at a reality that would be preferred by all, we have to first see what it actually is that we, collectively, want! Unless we can agree on what it is that we collectively want, we would merely continue to strive for a reality that we would like to experience individually--and this would, of course, result in reconciling of our differences in real life, with all the accompanying suffering that we are familiar with--social and environmental degradation that happens only because we don't agree on what should be the best for all of us. In other words--instead of reconciling of our differences harmlessly in models (or by using any other expedient means), we let our differences to reconcile in real life causing real harm and grief.

**A wish:**

May all differences, all controversies, and all conflicts be resolved harmlessly in meditations, prayers, models--using what-so-ever wholesome and expedient means--to benefit all beings, starting with all beings that there are here and now in this world! May there be no beings that would not benefit optimally!

May humans become fully ecologically and socially forever transparently sustainable for their own good and for the benefit of all beings!

**Meditation:**

Find, or imagine that there is, a mental space in which all the ideas of what anyone might think that their future should look like would be reconciled with each other, so that conflicts in real life would be prevented from occurring.

Please dedicate your practice to the optimal benefit of all beings of all three times and ten directions of space, starting here and now on Earth.

If we, the people, were really sincere about having real Peace in the world, we would use peaceful means to create Peace in the world rather than rely on the military!

## **Bodhisattvas!**

May all beings, without an exception, benefit utmost by this action in all ways possible, "spiritually" and "materially" alike, starting with all beings that there are here and now.

One thing in every Bodhisattva's practice in these days stands out: no matter how much we think that our practice is worth, the conditions for life in this world continue to deteriorate at ever increasing pace.

What can be going wrong? Are we not putting all our effort into our practice for the sole purpose of benefiting optimally all beings without an exception, including, of course, all beings that there are here and now also? Why do not beings that there exist here and now benefit? Why isn't the quality of life for all beings here and now improving?

No matter what explanations there might be offered, none satisfies, no matter how authoritative those explanations might be.

I would like to offer an explanation that, perhaps, will make sense:

The reason that things in this world are going from bad to worse generally is that Bodhisattvas, perhaps, don't have a clear idea, a clear thought in their minds of how (as exactly as possible) the affairs in this world should be conducted in order to be considered as offering the optimal conditions for existence for all beings here and now.

Or, perhaps, all Bodhisattvas in this world do have very clear ideas of what the optimal conditions for all life here and now ought to be, but that not a single one of those ideas is identical to other such ideas that other Bodhisattvas might have, since there is no platform to compare our ideas that we might have on the subject, and therefore we all direct our efforts towards sometimes even fundamentally divergent objectives.

Naturally enough--because there is no clearly defined idea of what this world should be like at its optimum, any betterment, any chance of conditions for all life here and now to become ideal is very small.

What needs to be done is that we all agree (by what-so-ever expedient means) on what actually the optimal conditions for all life on Earth should be. Without our harmonizing and unifying of all such ideas of what the ideal state of things in this world should be, we shall continue to see the situation in this world to deteriorate, wondering all the time how come our various practices meant to benefit all beings optimally bear no results.

Bodhisattvas! What kind of a world should the Earth be?

How shall we unify, harmonize all our individual ideas about what this world should be like ideally?

It would be possible to show that any and all sustainable life-styles (as long as those could be proven to be indeed sustainable) could co-exist on Earth, and that there would be enough space for all other species to exist also, but this possibility has to be presented in a suitable form for everybody on Earth to discuss and amend. (More to this at "The Ideal Sustainable Earth Model: Proposal." - [www.modeearth.org/ideal.html](http://www.modeearth.org/ideal.html) ). This should already be happening, but it still is not. Instead, there are very many disparate indistinct notions

presented, causing confusion. No wonder that the vital statistics don't show any encouragement!

May all differences, all controversies, all conflicts, all complaints that there are in this world among all beings be resolved peacefully by the power of all Bodhisattvas ever merit!

!OmManiPadmeHum!

May humans become fully and truly forever transparently sustainable for their own good and for the benefit of all beings!

Thank you, Mr. Jan Hearthstone - [www.ModelEarth.Org](http://www.ModelEarth.Org) .

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Creating Lasting Peace: <http://www.modelearth.org/peace.html>

If we, the people, were really sincere about having real Peace in the world, we would pursue creating Peace by peaceful means more actively rather than by relying on our military might!

### **An Appeal to Academia.**

online: [www.modelearth.org/acappeal.html](http://www.modelearth.org/acappeal.html)

Despite the advances that are being made in amassing of knowledge by humankind, not enough of this knowledge is being used to improve the overall quality of life on Earth, even though, arguably, there is enough knowledge available that would enable humankind to improve the living conditions of all life on Earth considerably.

That humankind's knowledge is not fully applied to improving the quality of Life on Earth might be mainly due to the fact that the application of knowledge to the what-so-ever various problems that might exist on Earth rests in the hands of people whose power and wisdom to apply knowledge to solving of our problems is limited at most times. This creates a situation where on one hand individuals who specialize in creating and enhancing of humankind's knowledge are free to create and enhance as much knowledge as they can and want (more or less), only to see, on the other hand, this knowledge not being applied to its full potential in serving the needs of humanity.

Humankind's knowledge has become very specialized--it is impossible for anyone to know enough on, perhaps, most subjects in any of the fields of knowledge. This situation limits our ability to plan our future effectively--it is difficult to achieve an agreement on what the ideal future should be since we don't understand each other well enough to communicate effectively.

This situation might be helped by creating of a model that would that would act as a sort of a "sandbox" in which all the diverse ideas on the subject of what the ideal state of affairs on Earth should be would be tested, vetted for doability, for being in accord with all that we know of earth and social processes, in which any and all knowledge available would be applied to portraying of an ideal Earth. Creating of such a model would permit a vast co-operation



across all the fields of all sciences--the closest thing to unification of sciences there might ever happen. The model would be based on the best reason for the existence of science: an actual application of knowledge for the benefit of life on Earth.

The on-going creation of such a model would eventually start presenting a picture of life on Earth progressively approaching better and better the ideal. The model would be an "ombudsman" without any executive powers, whose power would lie in the strength of presenting a model of for life on Earth optimal conditions based on all the knowledge available, to whose opinions the powers-that-there-might-be could gradually be attuned and subsequently sufficiently educated to apply their powers appropriately to the real needs of life on Earth.

No situation, or a research objective modeled could be too small, nor too large in scale, nor would anyone be prevented from trying to improve on any instance modeled, since the model would be ideally accessible by anyone on Earth. Any solutions to any problems would have to be, beside being consistent with the knowledge available in the database, open to anyone's critique and to anyone's improvements. Learning how to participate in the ongoing creation of the model would be the best possible education ever obtainable, because one would have to learn knowledge that would be pertinent to a successful co-existence of all of life forms on Earth.

All the components necessary for the creation of such a model are readily available--potentially all the PC's in the world linked together by, perhaps, using "distributed computing" (which would enable the model to exist without requiring any particular physical location) and the existing data-bases at all the institutions of learning there are. The labor necessary for running of the model could be gotten by diverting of the effort that goes into research that is being done already on solutions vital to humanity into conducting research within the model, thus reducing unnecessary redundancy and improving the quality of research by enabling more researchers from many more fields of science than is currently possible to work on those research problems together, and so vastly enhance the quality of any such research.

On a local community level, where everyone knows everyone and also knows what everyone's function within the society is, a computer would not even be necessary since a model of an ideal community would be easy to contain within the community's commonly shared consciousness within which everybody's opinions pertaining to what the community's ideal existence ought to be are known to all.

The Earth has only one possible future, a future that is the result of all the individual actions that are meant to improve the lives of all the individual actors and their progeny. By resolving conflicts that are a natural consequence of carrying out the individual actors' wishes for better conditions of their lives in a model, rather than in real life, a great amount of, mostly unnecessary, suffering could be avoided.

## **The Seed Vision: Universal Model of Sustainable Earth.**

online: [www.ModelEarth.Org/seed.html](http://www.ModelEarth.Org/seed.html)

A sustainable world can never be fully realized until it is widely envisioned. The vision must be built up by many people before it is complete and compelling. (Meadows 2004 p273)

We have to know what kind of a world we want to live in, if the one that we live in now we don't like.

The challenge is to come up with an idea of a world that would optimally suit us all; an ideal that all of us on Earth could strive for and focus on--a harmonious, truly sustainable co-existence of us all on Earth. The valid competition would be to improve on the ideal, and to find better ways of achieving this ideal, instead of competing for advantage over others to the detriment of the whole.

As long as we can all agree that we all want to live sustainably, there is a model possible that would show how to accommodate all of us on one planet:

Imagine an Earth where humans exist in zero population growth communities situated amidst wild, by humans unregulated nature where all the other species that we share this planet with live untroubled by humans.

These communities could exist at what-so-ever level of complexity of sustainability (from "hunter-gatherer" way of life to anything more complex), as long as they would be transparently and demonstrably sustainable, so that their way of living would not adversely affect the existence of other human communities and other life on Earth.

The basis of this "seed vision" would be an Earth populated by hunter-gatherers who would have a more than ample room to live in. In this way there would be no need for having to accommodate the other species sharing the Earth with us in any special way--those would always live in balance with humans who would not quite be able to inflict much damage on them.

If people would like to live at more complex ecologically and socially sustainable levels, they could do so by getting together and just start doing it, always careful not to exceed the population level of humans on Earth that would always remain fixed at what it would be if all humans lived as hunter-gatherers.

People would be able to "vote with their feet"--at any time when they would feel that they would like to live, either at a different place, or at a different level of sustainability, they would just re-group/re-locate. In this way social sustainability would be ensured --no one would be forced to stay at any place at any level of complexity of sustainability.

The ways of achieving the ideal depicted in the "universal model" would start suggesting themselves as soon as the model would appear to be practicable enough.

A great number of variations on this "seed vision" suggests itself--the result would still be a humanity that would harmoniously exist with itself and all other life on Earth, providing that humanity would adhere strictly to the "zero population growth" policy, and to living demonstrably and transparently sustainably.

A way of providing a satisfactory definition of "sustainable"/"sustainably" would be to demonstrate transparently in models (of any appropriate kind) that any situation would, or would not, indeed be "sustainable".

There is a need for a model of what the Earth should ideally look like that would be freely accessible by anyone on Earth, so that everyone can, at any point, see what progress is being made towards the ideal at any time, so that there is a reference available for any undertaking that might concern the welfare of anyone on the planet.

I suspect that this particular "universal" model as described above is not unknown, however I cannot remember where I could have found it--it could well have been a sci-fi book;

I would appreciate pointing out to me where else this idea might exist!

N.B.

The "vision" in the title harks back to Donella Meadows' "visioning"/"envisioning", which owes its being to Robert Fritz's "Technologies For Creating" (TFC). What "visioning"/"envisioning" is for Donella Meadows, Robert Fritz calls a "choice". Fritz' *The Path of Least Resistance* (Fritz 1984) is a necessary reading for anyone who wants to understand what Donella Meadows' "visioning"/"envisioning" is.

Donella Meadows' "Envisioning a Sustainable World", in which she explains what "visioning"/"envisioning" is, is online:

[www.sustainer.org/pubs/Envisioning.DMeadows.pdf](http://www.sustainer.org/pubs/Envisioning.DMeadows.pdf)

and so is what I wrote on her "visioning"/"envisioning" concept:

"Visioning": Global Citizens Designing a Sustainable World Together -

[www.modelearth.org/donella-vision.html](http://www.modelearth.org/donella-vision.html).

In *Limits to Growth: The 30-Year Update* the authors write about the "sustainable revolution", the next biggest social change coming. (Meadows, et al. 2004, chapter 8, p273)

The Universal Sustainable Earth Model (The Seed Vision) is a "complete", all-encompassing vision of a sustainable Earth; It is complete, because any sustainable life-style can be accommodated within the model, as long as that "life-style" indeed is provably sustainable.

What is needed now is to make this all-encompassing vision of a sustainable Earth "compelling".

## **The State of the Ideal Earth Design.**

online: [www.modelearth.org/state.html](http://www.modelearth.org/state.html)

I am trying to find out what is there in the world that deals with collectively designing how we all should ideally exist together in this world.

Currently there is no clearly defined, referable to, by anyone accessible, and by anyone amendable model of an ideal, sustainable Earth yet.

Listed below are some of the most prominent, promising, for modeling the ideal state of the Earth potentially important concepts:

### **Donella Meadows concept of "envisioning"/"visioning".**

There are currently many groups and communities in the world that purport to be creating "visions" of how a group, or a community should live together; "visions" created by, if not all of the members of those groups and communities, then, at least, by more than one person, using methods that derive from Donella Meadows' "envisioning"/"visioning" (Meadows 1996) concept that ultimately owes its origin to Robert Fritz's TFC (Technologies For Creating) as originally introduced in his *The Path of Least Resistance* (Fritz 1984).

The Donella Meadows' "envisioning"/"visioning" cannot really be properly understood without understanding the very clear Robert Fritz's TFC concept (Fritz 1984) of creating results that we want.

Please see author's

Hearthstone, Jan

2009 "Donella Meadows' 'Visioning': Global Citizens Designing a Sustainable World Together." - <http://www.modelearth.org/donella-vision.html>

### **Robert Jungk's "future workshops" ("Zukunftwerkstätte") (Jungk 1987)**

Any of the examples of consensual common reality vision creating based on Robert Jungk's "future workshops" that I found so far don't go beyond the scope of a local community, with no results that could really be called "sustainable".

### **ESDA (Future Search)**

ESDA's Envisioning a Sustainable and Desirable America - <http://www.uvm.edu/giee/ESDA/am2100.html>

This "Future Search" ( <http://www.futuresearch.com>, <http://www.futuresearch.net/>) based consensus building system is really not a careful combined "... vision" of more participants, but rather a forecast 100 years into the future on the way to a not declared ideal, "... agreed [on] a set of 'realistic' assumptions both about people and the rest of the world that embodied the latest scientific research findings....".

The impression I got was a depiction of a not quite sustainable future (this future has some hi-tech objects that would be impossible to manufacture by socially and ecologically sustainable methods, in my opinion) that still was evolving to some unspecified ideal--the time in this particular vision of a future in 100 years depicted by three "visitors" was very clearly linear, still evolving to something else; Time in any vision of a sustainable ideal (even though the ideal itself might be evolving continuously) is cyclical--seasons, moon phases change in an ideal reality.

I would like to learn more about this "... Virtual Visit to a Sustainable and Desirable America, 2100...", but no links at the site work yielded much about this "Virtual Visit", so far.

## **Grassroots Government: The World's Ombudsman.<sup>1</sup>**

online: [www.modearth.org/world-gov.html](http://www.modearth.org/world-gov.html)

Today most people are not represented in their government properly, if at all, regardless where this might be in the world.

Even in the most advanced democracies of the "first world" countries it might take a long time before wrongs being committed on minorities are addressed to a satisfaction; Wrongs committed on individuals might never be considered at all, in most instances, mostly due to the impossibility of people having an equal access to justice.

This pattern is common to even the most humanely advanced societies; A pattern that is impossible to imagine to ever improve.

The most salient characteristics of today's forms of government is that there are no provisions for improving the system to be more efficient and more just in any satisfactory way. Inefficiency and social injustice are permanent fixtures that are to stay with us forever, unless a radically, and a long overdue change for much better happens in the way that we govern ourselves.

What is really needed is that instead of leaving behind in our wake all the detritus of imperfections and injustice, these should be ideally dealt with before those ever happen. There has to be a way of dealing with any kind of problems as soon as their very possible existence is suspected! The only way to accomplish that is to get every citizen actively interested in their government by making it possible for every citizen to have an equal say in governing themselves! Then it would be every citizen's own responsibility and a duty to look after their very own interests--they would then have no one else to blame than themselves for any (other than natural) misfortunes!

Of course--before all of this happens, this project could be started as a universal Ombudsman(1)-like entity (but far superseding the "ombudsman" definition!) existing as a network on from local to global level that would deal with any complaints and suggestions pertaining to the welfare of society, and offer wholesome re-solutions--optimally suitable realities whose implementation would rely on their moral and factual strength only. But this would be enough at the beginning, and it would be something that a small number of people could start.

More on how all this could be accomplish is at [www.ModelEarth.Org](http://www.ModelEarth.Org)

## **Donella Meadows' "Visioning":**

### **Global Citizens Designing a Sustainable World Together.**

online: <http://www.modelearth.org/donella-vision.html>

There is a need for expediency--we find ourselves already on the downslope that comes after the set of exponential curves (representing the exploitation of resources, ability of the planet to heal itself, and the growth of population) starts indicating the downward crash-course, according to *Limits to Growth: The 30-Year Update* (Meadows 2004), the Global Footprint Network (Global Footprint Network 2009), and many other authorities on the subject. We are increasingly using more of resources than can be supplied by our planet and are overtaxing our planet's self-healing capacities. We are in a state of emergency. The "crash", that is so obviously coming, would be unprecedented in magnitude in human history if we let it happen. A great many horrible scenarios are presenting themselves, but there are no good scenarios in which the Earth is saved at the end--good scenarios that would be thorough enough to use as adequate "blue-prints" to (re-)construct the Earth anew (an Earth that would be demonstrably fully sustainable--why bother re-constructing an imperfect design?); good scenarios to use as "visionings" to be shared and strive for by all of us.

In our current situation we have a myriad well founded reasons to be alarmed; any reasons to be optimistic about our prospects on this planet are not founded on any rational grounds.

Our situation is not hopeless; all the ills that plague the Earth now are individually possible to deal with. We have all the knowledge and resources for to deal with each of our exigencies and problems. But it is difficult to deal with all of them at once and also in such a manner that one remedy would not ever undo the effects of any other appropriate remedies. To imagine the combined effect of all the remedies, to see what the whole picture would look like after all of the remedies have run their course, is not practiced to any extend yet. Yet this is where a great deal of hopelessness, confusion, and cynicism about our collective fate stems from. We have no assurance that our efforts will ever achieve desirable result (what should "desirable" results look like anyhow?).

We have to enter the crash zone as a fully sustainable humanity--the sooner we become truly sustainable, the better for us. The longer we continue applying sporadic, disjointed, ineffectual remedies without any clear idea what it exactly is that we want to achieve by applying those, the less able we will be to deal with what is coming to us. Some humans might survive, but in no shape that we would still recognize as "human" (except, perhaps, anatomically).

It is very important to know what this "fully sustainable humanity" should look like, so that we know what it is that we need to do in order to become such a "fully sustainable humanity" that would be able to deal with the exigency. Without becoming truly sustainable we don't stand a chance. We could never hope to prevent the "crash" and to heal the planet while still continuing our unsavory non-sustainable societal and environmental practices.

The authors think in *Limits to Growth: The 30-Year Update* (Meadows 2004) that the next revolution will be the "sustainable revolution", and that it will happen "organically", and that it cannot be planned--I think that the very needed "sustainable revolution" will not happen at all

at the pace it is happening now at (when it should already be in a full swing).

I think this "sustainable revolution" will happen only if we bring it into being very deliberately using a concerted effort. The "deadline" in this case cannot be kept on being extended indefinitely. There is no more time left to rely on "hit or miss" methods meant to help us used in real time/space--every step of this revolution has to be "hit or miss" tested in models to avoid any waste of time and energy, which as it would happen in real time/space (not to mention loss of many lives--both human and non-human!). There is no more time to merely hope that all the well meant good sustainable deeds and good sustainable trends that there are will (somehow, but we don't quite know how exactly, or even roughly) result in a sustainable humanity.

Donella Meadows (note 1) (1941 - 2001), well known to all serious environmentalists, was one of the very few environmentalists who realized that it is not enough just to want to improve on things in order to overcome the horrendous environmental and social crises that humanity is facing presently. She knew that it was important that we have a vision of how a world we would like to live in should look like in order for our efforts to be successful in averting, in mollifying the effects of the "crash" (that is to follow our having reached the limits of being able to punish ourselves and our planet) without directly experiencing any repercussions. For this see her "Envisioning a Sustainable World" (Meadows 1994), and the chapter 8 of *Limits to Growth: The 30-Year Update* (Meadows 2004) in which the need for "visioning" is described.

It was Peter Senge (author of *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization* 1990) who introduced Donella Meadows to Robert Fritz's "Technologies for Creating" (TFC) from where Donella Meadows learned of the need for, what she calls, "visioning" (or "envisioning" at times (note 2). Robert Fritz's "Technologies for Creating" is best explained in Robert Fritz's *The Path of Least Resistance* (Fritz 1984)--a "must" reading for anyone who wants to understand Donella Meadows' "visioning".

I have to emphasize: Donella Meadows' "visioning" gets misunderstood because "visioning" requires a bit more than mere intellectual understanding; it takes a while for the ramifications to "sink in" despite its being a very simple concept that says that we cannot get what we don't know what that, that we want to get, is. We have to first know what it is that we want, and only then we stand a chance of, maybe, obtaining it. There is nothing at all "visionary" about this. Donella Meadows' "visioning" is not anything handed down to us--we have to generate our visions ourselves. To paraphrase Robert Fritz: instead of reacting to outside (relative to ourselves) conditions, we set our goals ourselves according to what we really want (not that we might feel that we should be wanting), and start working towards what we ourselves decided that we really want.

Donella Meadows writes at the end of the subchapter of chapter 8 of *Limits to Growth: The 30-Year Update* (Meadows 2004) titled "Truth-Telling": All the models, including the ones in our heads, are a little right, much too simple, and mostly wrong. How do we proceed in such a way as to test our models and learn where they are right and wrong? How do we speak to each other as fellow modelers with an appropriate mixture of skepticism and respect?...

Donella Meadows died prematurely, and, as far as I know, did not pursue the matter of "...test[ing] our models and learn[ing] where they are right and wrong..." any further. (I would

like to be wrong on this--please let me know whether there are any sources that I should be aware of.)

I, myself have run into this myself, if by a very different route; From wanting to live self-sufficiently, through wanting to be sustainable, to the recognition that a single family, not even a single community can ever make it to remain sustainable in a world that would swallow up such an entity without a hesitation! Naturally the whole world has to become sustainable in order for humans to survive without a shame!

I assume that this is the same with many other people who decided that to live sustainably is an intelligent way of existing on this planet for humans--while this decision might be easy for individuals, those individuals might start realizing that unless the whole of humanity becomes ecologically and socially sustainable, one's own living so makes little, if any, impact on the overall quality of life on Earth;

The problem becomes two-fold: 1) How to reconcile the different notions that there are about what "sustainability" is? 2) How to convince a decisive portion of humanity that to live sustainably is an intelligent way of existence?

When one surveys the sustainability movement, it becomes apparent (as it did to Donella Meadows) that although there is a lot of commotion about becoming sustainable, there are a very few people who would have an idea what a sustainable world should look like, because it is more common to hear about what people would not like to have in their realities, rather than what their ideal realities should look like. (note 3)

Things would be simple if everybody on Earth would like to live sustainably. The wide variety of what people understand under the term "sustainable" could be accommodated in one sustainable Earth model, providing, those ideas would indeed be provably sustainable--i.e.: it would be possible to demonstrate in models that they indeed are sustainable. Please see "The Ideal Sustainable Earth Model: Proposal" - [www.modelearth.org/ideal.html](http://www.modelearth.org/ideal.html) .

But--since not everyone on Earth desires to live sustainably, a different way of arriving at the whole of humanity living on Earth sustainably has to be devised:

It may be safely assumed that most people are reasonable enough to see that resolving of any differences, controversies, and complains--such as there might be among all on Earth--might be immensely easier if done in models, rather than in real life where it causes a great deal of waste of lives, resources, and time. All that would have to be done would be to want for all those reasonable people to arrive at a portrayal of an Earth that would offer the optimal conditions for life for all. This could be done by modeling of any appropriate kind.

It would be beyond and above the scope of this writing to describe all the possible implication of this approach, more on this is contained in this booklet, and at [www.ModelEarth.Org](http://www.ModelEarth.Org) .

By using modeling it would be easier to introduce into such an ensuing "portrayal" notions of ecological and social sustainability; This, also, could be a way of "...test[ing] our models and learn[ing] where they are right and wrong..."--done by unifying and vetting all of these ideas in models, by finding out in models what ideas are more "sustainable" than others, using all the available knowledge that we have of ecological and societal processes to determine the merit of the ideas inputted. Although everybody would have the access to the interactive modeling process, it would never be personalities that would determine the process; it would always be



ideas that would be vetted on the basis of their merit alone. Politics would become a true science where popularity contests between personalities would cease to matter.

The purpose of such "global unification" of the great variety of any ideas pertaining to human society and the global environmental concerns would not be any other than coming up with a single global model of what a sustainable Earth should be, its being a single model because one Earth can only have one sustainable future at a time, and striving for various different models in real life/time is a waste of time, lives, and resources, since all the differences among all the various ideas would have to be reconciled by trial and error method in real life/time anyhow!--we do not have much time left to be able to do that; we have to expedite this process by modeling. The modeling process in the end would be no more (but not less) than a tool that would take the horrendously wasteful and very inefficient way of finding out whether an idea is good or not out of testing the idea in real life, and do exactly the same--finding out how good an idea is--in models! Why settle our differences on battle fields, if we can resolve our differences in models? It would not be necessary that everybody would have to take a part in modeling; this could be started with a few people from each opposing sides of any conflict currently underway on Earth (be it a ideological, or even an armed conflict), to start presenting rational, defensible resolutions to any problems. No personalities (that are so "necessary" in today's political process) would be needed--only ideas themselves would be entering the modeling process.

The model of an ideal world (ours) would be based on real hard data, on all that we know about this world and all life in it. The existence of computer games that depict entire worlds for, so far, entertainment purposes only, shows that the same, or similar approach could be used for designing an Earth where humankind's existence could be shown at its optimum.

It would not matter what media for modeling would be used as long as the media used would serve the purpose. On a local community level (where everybody knows everybody else well) discussions and finding out what what all members of the community wish for a happy life are would, perhaps, be a good start. But still--all the "visionings" made in all local communities would have to be all synchronized globally in order to see how all local sustainable communities would get along on the global scale. For this there hardly could be a better tool than the Internet where it would be possible to have a by all accessible interactive model of an ideal Earth.

In order to bring Donella Meadow's efforts to a fruitful completion, which could not be anything else but for humankind to become truly sustainable, the idea of "visioning" has to be introduced into the "sustainable movement" on a full scale, and all our various visions of what a sustainable Earth ought to be have to be synchronized and unified into a single, comprehensive design that then could be striven for by all of us.

It would mean that all our differences, controversies, conflicts, and complains would be resolved in models with much less waste of lives, resources, and time, instead of resolving those in real life and, at the same, time creating new problems, as the practice is today.

It would not be necessary that all people from the whole world would have to start modeling an ideal world together at first. At first it would be sufficient that the modeling would be started, if only by a handful of people (Margaret Mead: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever

has." (note 4). But--the modeling process would have to be accessible to anyone who would want to do so also! The whole process would be entirely transparent, entirely honest, non-hierarchical, no top-down at all; the process would have to be so clear that learning it would be an organic process for anyone--from the simpler elements to more complexity gradually and at everybody's own speed, learning that that the learner would have to know, would like to know in order to be able to contribute the modeling process sufficiently informed (please see "The Ideal Sustainable Earth Model: Proposal." - online: [www.modelearth.org/ideal.html](http://www.modelearth.org/ideal.html) ).

This concept of unifying of individual ideas of what our common existence on this planet could be used also resolving conflicts--it would eventually become an ideal grass-root government to put our current way of doing politics out of business entirely. Please see "Designing a Lasting World Peace Together" - [www.ModelEarth.Org](http://www.ModelEarth.Org) .

## **Home: The Very "Leverage Point".<sup>1</sup>**

online: [www.modelearth.org/leverage.html](http://www.modelearth.org/leverage.html)

The most obvious place where a meaningful intervention would start a profound change for better in the whole world is the basic unit of any community--a home. It is at home where we grow up and learn the basics of living as humans; it is where we should go to get well, to rest and to recuperate; it is at home where we get ready, time after time, to interact with the world outside our home. However, the "home" of today is very different from what it ideally ought to be.

A "home" today is an indicator of our social system's dysfunctionality (note 2) .Consider this: It is obvious to everyone that humans need to rest, to sleep, to take care of their basic needs to be able to function well within the society. To take care of all these essential needs should, of course, be done at home. Everyone knows that to be homeless is to be avoided at all costs. Yet it is commonly accepted as a good thing when prices of homes go up and thus homes become less available. Logically, rationally this does not make any sense!

As a result of this the society as a whole suffers. A "home", as we know it today, is frequently a source of discomfort, anxieties, a source of existential stress, and this results in a plethora of societal ills that plague the whole society.

People who don't have a proper home are more likely to suffer from lack of rest, sleep, from financial worries (about finding a good home, about having to pay the rent, mortgages, taxes...); They, due to this stress, are more likely to engage in criminal activities, they are more likely to become physically and mentally affected, and generally the unavailability of a good home to most members of the society creates stress that ultimately permeates all parts of the society.

The obvious solution to this conundrum would be to ensure that instead of a home to be an expensive privilege, to have a home, no matter how humble a home, should become a thing necessary for people to have in order to be able to function well in the society. In short--instead of a source of stress, a home should become a source of comfort, a place to where one goes to become well.

The most expedient way to make sure that a home becomes a secure and a sustainable foundation of the society would be to change only one thing: the right to sleep, to rest, and to be able to take a basic care of one's basic necessities would have to be introduced into the constitution as an inalienable right; No more, and no less.

To constitutionalize all the basic things that are necessary for a satisfactory quality of life as basic rights would alone ensure an organic unfolding of all necessary adjustments in the social fabric. An unfolding into a profound and lasting relief that would be felt all across the globe.

People need land to live on, to have their homes on. The surface of Earth is a valuable and also a limited resource. A resource that is too valuable to let any irrational, fickle commercial interests to be in charge of. Land is precious, it has to be managed intelligently--all kinds of life, not only humans, need it for living; An unnecessary stress, felt by all directly and indirectly, is caused by the gross mismanagement of land that is currently in existence--a stress that we hardly can allow to exist, especially in times of ecological and social crises that we are faced with these days.

A good stress-free home (one's castle indeed!) should be the basis of any truly civilized society, regardless whether the times are good or bad. At home is where culture is being continuously re-created. If there, at home, is any lack what-so-ever, it will affect the whole of the civilization.

### **Crisis: Taking Care of the Basics.**

online: [www.modelearth.org/opport.html](http://www.modelearth.org/opport.html)

Providing of basic needs that are necessary for life, for one to successfully function within the society, should no longer be entrusted to the sphere of economics, an arcane discipline that is incomprehensible even to the experts.

The access to the basic necessities can not be considered a privilege, nor a handout, but a thing that is necessary for a healthy existence of humankind. Every human's access to the basic needs fulfillment is the sane, sustainable base for life on this planet. The basic human needs are having an access to good food, water, and a place to rest and to take care of one's basic necessities--a home. People who are prevented from fulfilling those very basic needs not only suffer themselves, but they also become a burden on the society--people under stress are more likely to become ill (both--physically and mentally), and they are more likely to engage in antisocial activities. Defining the basics human needs must not be a mere exercise of personal opinions, but has to be backed by showing fully and exhaustively the advantages of having those basics fully attended to; by showing that fulfilling of those basic needs is necessary in order for humanity to be fully sane and fully sustainable.

It is urgent to take care of the basic problems of our society in a transparent and perpetually self-sustainable manner. Merely chasing after symptoms, rather than addressing the root causes of our problems, will never result in any worthwhile achievements. It must be seen clearly that without assuring the fulfillment of the basic needs of every human the whole

society will suffer, and that any and all problems humankind is experiencing will continue to be exacerbated indefinitely, if those problems are not tracked down to where they stem from, and there solved no less than as best as we are capable of.

If we take care of the basic needs of everyone now, any future crises yet to come will be easier to bear and to deal with. If we don't take care of the basics now, we and our descendants might even never be able to pay for the consequences of not doing so. This country is responsible for spreading of many ideas globally--for better, or for worse. Now is a chance for doing a really good turn to the whole Earth!

## **Capitalism with a Human Face:**

### **A Proposal for the Establishment of a Sustainable Capitalism.**

online: [www.modelearth.org/modest.html](http://www.modelearth.org/modest.html)

In popular theory non-regulated capitalism would take care of itself without much intervention and regulation. The mechanism of demand and supply would function like a well oiled steam engine. But due to whatever causes, this pure capitalism has not been able to manifest itself fully so far (too much regulation is being blamed for this, mostly)--it so happens that now and then the economy system collapses, or nearly so, with unwanted and dire side-effects.

This writing aims to propose a way of life that could still remain a capitalism--not regulated as much as it currently is (with the bellow suggested improvements), but one in which the worst of ills associated with capitalism as we know it now (especially known when the system doesn't perform well) would be mostly prevented from occurring--most of criminality, homelessness, hunger, modern diseases, mental disorders, wars, etc.

More-over--in this way the transition of humanity to living truly sustainably would be made much easier.

This would be ensured by making it possible for people to provide for themselves with the basic things necessary for human life by people's having an access to, at the very least, a place where to take the very necessary care of their basic needs--rest, sleep, a way of keeping clean (a safe campsite?), and being able to grow their own food (if need be), so that the worst that could ever happen to anyone would be a life with, perhaps, no frills what-so-ever, but a life where the basic necessities--a good basic shelter and adequate, good basic food--would always be obtainable; A life of a fundamental "social security"--not provided by some complicated, resources-wasting state machinery that never can take care of any problems adequately well enough ever, but provided by those in need by themselves for themselves.

The weakest point in our modern age society is the difficulty of obtaining, having, and maintaining a good quality home. To exactly here most of the problems that plague our society could be traced to.

Currently it is as if the society that we live in were waging a war against itself--the losers in the social mobility process not only lose their social standing, but they are left in a position in which life itself is almost impossible. As it is, people who are unable to afford a place to live

also find soon that even just to sleep anywhere is impossible, unless they trespass, in most cases. At the same time it is considered a good thing when the price of a place to live rises. This simple fact causes a great stress within the whole society, as no-one wants to share the fate of those at the very bottom--the homeless--and yet many, paradoxically, strive to make profit on the housing market, knowing fully that they are making it difficult for themselves, should they ever become the losers (as many indeed do).

This peculiar way of existence could be well understood in the context of war. This continuous stressing of the whole society could be seen as a winding up of a spring that is released in times of a conflict with other peoples--the hostility that is "normally" being directed towards the members of the society is released at the now enemy to stress them, and hopefully cause them damage. It is a picture of a continuously waged war--even in the intervals of "peace" the society keeps in a fighting shape by practicing cruelty on its own members.

This above mentioned mode of existence has no use for a lasting peace in which the pursuit of gentle capitalism could thrive, and vice versa--a lasting world peace has no use for such a self-destructive, problematic behavior. If we truly desire a conflict-free world (this is being professed by most, it would seem) in which intelligent capitalism could exist, we first have to stop waging war against ourselves at home, and start practicing neighborly love. It would not have to mean that social mobility would cease to exist (would capitalism be possible then?), but it would mean that reaching the very bottom would not be a social and a physical annihilation of a person, but only having to get by with the bare-bone conditions necessary for life. This would take a tremendous strain off the whole society--people would be less likely to engage in anti-social behavior out of sheer desperation, become addicts, criminals, mad, etc. (Please see *Designing a Lasting World Peace Together*. - [www.modelearth.org/peace.html](http://www.modelearth.org/peace.html) .)

#### The Proposal:

No matter what economical or political misfortune befalls the population, or just only individuals, in times when the infrastructure and/or money either temporarily, or permanently would stop providing the basic life-support properly, every community should be prepared to enable its members to be able to take care of their basic life needs--they should be assured of a place to live (no matter if this should be only a decent campsite--something that most homeless today can only dream of), and they should be able to grow their own food--either on individual and/or, preferably, communal basis.

There should be contingency plans that would as precisely as possible detail what should be done in times of no money when rents could not be paid, and when no food would be coming from the outside of communities and would have to be grown locally, enough for every member of the communities, so that no undue social disruptions due to the lack of the basic necessities take place ever. (I think that more communities today are prepared to deal with riots, rather than with providing basic support to the population in hard times that would preempt the occurrence of social unrest.)

Unless we stop war at home first, we will never stop war anywhere else, at least not for long. Unless we stop war for good, we can never become truly sustainable.

I do realize that it might be considered naive to suppose that a sustainable capitalism would

come into being overnight, but it is becoming increasingly obvious that the paradigm that humanity has been operating under for so long needs to be changed fundamentally for humankind to have any chance of a decent survival on this planet.

The objective of the new paradigm is exactly this:

to compete at who is better at cooperating at making this planet an ideal world.

## **Preventing a Ton of Cure: Disaster Preparedness.**

online: [www.modelearth.org/art01.html](http://www.modelearth.org/art01.html)

Disasters, be they natural or human made, do occur--they have been occurring all throughout human history, they occur nowadays; they are nothing new to us. They do not surprise us.

Sadly though, whenever a disaster causing human and material damages happens, we act very shocked and surprised, time after time again. I say "act", because we should not, really, act surprised each time a disaster causes life loss and damage, wherever this might happen in the world, because we know of the possibility of disasters happening just about at any place on Earth, and we can envision what damages might occur at those places at such times.

Common sense dictates that it would be much wiser to prevent and to mitigate any possible effects of any disaster before it happens! I am sure that the state of the art of our science is such that we already are aware of the inadequacy of our disaster preparedness--why don't we use our capabilities, our knowledge to be ready (better than we are now) in case of disasters, and more importantly--why don't we do everything humanly possible to prevent the terrible damages and life loss that happen every so often, before a disaster does happen?

All this that I write is very trite, but it is true--time after time again. We know that disasters do happen; we know very well what the aftermath of any potential disaster anywhere in the world could be, and yet--anytime a disaster strikes, we play the same game over and over again. We feel very sorry for the victims, we feed the huge relief industry with our money, and we are ready for the next round, without ever trying to address the problem at where it might be stemming from well enough to make a difference.

Wouldn't it be much more humane to become concerned before disasters happen, and feel compassion for our neighbors before something preventable happens and causes grief to them?

Here is what I would like to suggest:

Let us have a look all over the globe, and let us try to imagine what damages could happen should a disaster, natural or otherwise, happen there.

Let us do get prepared for any relief that might be necessary in the future for after any disaster might happen, but--let us also start suggesting what the optimal conditions at each potential disaster site would have to be to make damage and loss of life minimal, should a disaster happen there.

May all these suggestions be made "visible" in models that would be accessible to anyone on the Internet, or by using what-so-ever media available, and may all this be open to critique and input by anyone who might feel that they may have some ideas pertinent to the subject to offer.

It would not be realistic to expect that all of these suggestions of how the ideal situations in which as little damage and life loss would happen in case of disasters would be immediately followed up upon, but, all of these suggestions would be there to be implemented when possible. The models would be there for anyone to see where to put their efforts into before anything bad happens, rather than be ever so concerned after a disaster strikes.

The news that we hear on the radio on the TV, etc., after each disaster strikes are the wrong kind of news. What the news should be about every day, should be about how we are preventing the next disaster from happening! About what the potential dangers are where, and about what should be done so that the next disaster, should it happen, would cause as little damage as possible.

### **Mahayana: Philosophy for Sustainability.**

online: [www.modelearth.org/mahaecosoc.html](http://www.modelearth.org/mahaecosoc.html)

Mahayana is a view that acknowledges the interconnectedness of all phenomena across all time and all space; a view that posits that any- and every-one's well-being depends on the well-being of every other being's across all time and all space.

A Bodhisattva is one who strives to realize the ideal of Mahayana, and therefore regards the well-being of all other beings as important as one's own well-being.

To live ecologically and socially sustainably means to acknowledge the need of all beings--all beings without an exception--to live as well as possible.

Thus the need for living ecologically and socially sustainably is implicit in Mahayana.

Therefore--an aspiring Bodhisattva would help all beings, starting with all beings that there are here and now (for here and now is there always), to be mentally and physically optimally well--with no beings favored, with no beings left behind--and therefore an aspiring Bodhisattva would promote the way of living fully ecologically and socially transparently sustainably.

To live "transparently sustainably" is necessary in order that should ever anything start becoming non-sustainable, it would be spotted and corrected soon at the start.

"Transparency" in this case could be (for working purposes) defined thus: the younger a child to understand any supposedly sustainable ecologically and/or social process would be, the more a chance there is that such a process would indeed be sustainable.

There is too much unnecessary suffering in the world today inflicted by humans on themselves and many other beings in the whole world today.

Benefiting all beings in "all three times and ten directions of space" has to start here and now!, or it will never happen any other time, nor any other place.

Here and now is forever--in "all three times and ten directions of space".

### **IMPORTANT!:**

The reason that humanity has not become ecologically and socially sustainable yet, and that there still is no lasting world peace in evidence, is that we all wish, meditate and pray for different things in this regard.

What is needed is to create a unified idea of what living ecologically and socially, and what a lasting world peace should actually be like, so that we all aim for the same thing!

More on how to unify all the diverse ideas of what what ecologically and socially humanity, and what a lasting world peace should actually be like, please visit [Designing the Future of the Earth Together](#), and [Designing a Lasting World Peace Collectively](#), where I am trying to introduce a concept of designing the future of the Earth collaboratively.

### **Meditation:**

Find, or imagine that there is, a mental space in which all the ideas of what anyone might think that their future should look like would be reconciled with the ideas of all others, so that conflicts in real life would be prevented from occurring.

### **Prayer:**

May all differences, all controversies, all conflicts, and all complaints that there are in the world among all beings be resolved harmlessly in meditations, by prayers, in models, and/or by using what-so-ever wholesome, expedient, and effective means!

May humans become ecologically and socially fully and truly transparently sustainable (and may they stay so forever!) for their own good, and for the benefit of all those beings who suffer unnecessarily only because of humans!

May we have good sustainable homes for ourselves, all our children, all our families, our friends, and our ohana!

Please dedicate your practice to the optimal benefit of all beings of all three times and ten directions of space, starting with the optimal benefit of all beings here and now on Earth.

This article is based on numerous teachings that I had the fortune to receive from Tibetan Buddhist teachers for over the last more than thirty years, on what I had studied about Mahayana on my own, on my personal realizations, and on my reading about and practicing ideas (for over the last twenty years) of Robert Fritz' as he wrote about them in *The Path of Least Resistance*.

All the views and opinions in this article are mine.

### **Endnotes:**

#### **Grassroots Government: The World's Ombudsman**

p12 Note 1 Ombudsman:



[www.yourdictionary.com/ombudsman](http://www.yourdictionary.com/ombudsman)

[dictionary.reference.com/browse/ombudsman](http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/ombudsman)

### p13- Donella Meadows' "Visioning": Designing a Sustainable World Together

p14 Note 1:

Donella Meadows co-authored together with Jorgen Randers and Dennis Meadows *The Limits to Growth* (Meadows, et al.1972), *Beyond the Limits* (Meadows, et al. 1992), and *Limits to Growth: The 30-Year Update* (Meadows, et al. 2004), and wrote "Envisioning a Sustainable World" 1994 (these are only a few of her writings from among many others).

p14 Note 2:

The approach, which Donella Meadows calls "envisioning" and/or "visioning", is a part of "Technologies For Creating" (TFC), pioneered by Robert Fritz (Fritz 1984) is described in *The Path of Least Resistance*, (Fritz 1984) and is based on a common-sense notion that one cannot really ever get, achieve anything, unless one knows, as well as possible, what that something that one wants to get is. The best to show how difficult it is to get people to imagine what there should be in an ideal situation instead of listing everything that should not be there, let us quote from Donella Meadows' "Envisioning a Sustainable World" (Meadows 1996):

QUOTE:

A World Without Hunger.

About ten years ago I ran a series of workshops intended to figure out how to end hunger. The participants were some of the world's best nutritionists, agronomists, 2 economists, demographers, ecologists, and field workers in development -- people who were devoting their lives in one way or another to ending hunger.

Peter Senge of MIT, a colleague who helped design and carry out the workshops, suggested that we open each one by asking the assembled experts, "What would the world be like if there were no hunger?" Surely each of these people had a motivating vision of the goal he or she was working for. It would be interesting to hear and collect these visions and to see if they varied by discipline, by nationality, or by personal experience.

I thought this exercise would take about an hour and would help the participants get to know each other better. So I opened the first workshop by asking, "What is your vision of a world without hunger?" Coached by Peter, I made the request strongly visionary. I asked people to describe not the world they thought they could achieve, or the world they were willing to settle for, but the world they truly wanted.

What I got was an angry reaction. The participants refused. They said that was a stupid and dangerous question. Here are some of their comments:

Visions are fantasies, they don't change anything. Talking about them is a waste of time. We don't need to talk about what the end of hunger will be like, we need to talk about how to get there.

- We all know what it's like not to be hungry. What's important to talk about is how terrible it is to be hungry,
- I never really thought about it. I'm not sure what the world would be like without hunger, and I don't see why I need to know.
- Stop being unrealistic. There will always be hunger. We can decrease it, but we can never eliminate it.
- You have to be careful with visions. They can be dangerous. Hitler had a vision. I don't trust visionaries and I don't want to be one.

After we got those objections out of our systems, some deeper ones came up. One person said, with emotion, that he couldn't stand the pain of thinking about the world he really wanted, when he was so aware of the world's present state. The gap between what he longed for and what he knew or expected was too great for him to bear. And finally another person said what may have come closer to the truth than any of our other rationalizations: "I have a vision, but it would make me feel childish and vulnerable to say it out loud. I don't know you all well enough to do this."

That remark struck me so hard that I have been thinking about it ever since. Why is it that we can share our cynicism, complaints, and frustrations without hesitation with perfect strangers, but we can't share our dreams? How did we arrive at a culture that constantly, almost automatically, ridicules visionaries? Whose idea of reality forces us to "be realistic?" When were we taught, and by whom, to suppress our visions?

Whatever the answers to those questions, the consequences of a culture of cynicism are tragic. If we can't speak of our real desires, we can only marshal information, models, and implementation toward what we think we can get, not toward what we really want. We only half-try. We don't reach farther than the lengths of our arms. If, in working for modest goals, we fall short of them, for whatever reason, we reign in our expectations still further and try for even less. In a culture of cynicism, if we exceed our goals, we take it as an unrepeatable accident, but if we fail, we take it as an omen. That sets up a positive feedback loop spiraling downward. The less we try, the less we achieve. The less we achieve, the less we try. Without vision, says the Bible, the people perish.

END QUOTE.

However, while it might be incomparably easier to decide on personal goals to achieve, or to get a small group to agree on what the preferred commonly shared existence (as in the quote above), the challenge in the case setting a goal for a favorable future of a whole planet is the need to unify coherently all the individual visions for a good, optimal future (developed to what-ever degree) of all who share and of all who will share the Earth!

p15 Note3:

The best way to see that a very few people can describe an ideal world that they would like to live in is to ask them. Usually they would tell you at a great length about what they don't want to have in such an ideal world, but when it comes to describing what they would like to have in it, the difficulty becomes apparent.

p17 Note4:

Margaret Mead with Gregory Bateson were at the beginnings of developing "Cybernetics" (Norbert Wiener) and "systems theory" (Jay Wright Forrester, Donella Meadows).

## Home: The Very "Leverage Point"

p17 Note 1

"leverage point"--a term probably most popularized by Donella Meadows - [http://www.sustainer.org/pubs/Leverage\\_Points.pdf](http://www.sustainer.org/pubs/Leverage_Points.pdf) (Accessed on 11/17/2009), and others, led by Jay Forrester at MIT, who were involved with "*The Limits to Growth*" initiated by the Club of Rome - [http://www.clubofrome.org/docs/confs/meadows\\_abstract\\_21\\_08\\_04.pdf](http://www.clubofrome.org/docs/confs/meadows_abstract_21_08_04.pdf)

p17 Note 2:

Dictionary.com:

dysfunction

–noun

2. any malfunctioning part or element: the dysfunctions of the country's economy.
3. Sociology. a consequence of a social practice or behavior pattern that undermines the stability of a social system.

<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/dysfunction>

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[www.sustainer.org/pubs/Envisioning.DMeadows.pdf](http://www.sustainer.org/pubs/Envisioning.DMeadows.pdf) (accessed 10/06/2009)

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