

Timeline

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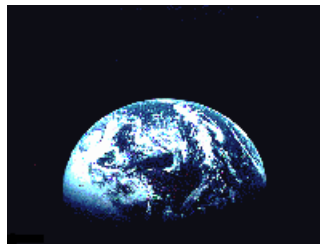
January/February 1998 - No. 37

A Publication of the Foundation for Global Community

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1997 State of the World Forum

Sunny skies greeted participants on the streets of San Francisco as they viewed the 90 panels making up the Walk Thru Time, a project initiated and developed by employees of the Hewlett-Packard Laboratories to chronicle the 5-billion-year story of life on Earth. Each foot along the one-mile Walk represents a million years.

In opening the Third State of the World Forum, held in early November in San Francisco, Forum president Jim Garrison issued a welcome, a warning, and a challenge to the more than 700 participants from 52 countries.

“We are living in a time of immense turbulence, challenge, and opportunity,” Garrison said. “Ancient institutions and systems of belief are being shattered by the force of change, compelled to either renew themselves or perish. We are at the birth of the first global civilization.

“A central question is whether we can morally afford the power we are creating. This challenge involves deepening our spiritual roots, increasing our sense of interconnection with our surrounding environment, and sustaining eternal vigilance over our democratic process of government.

“How should we fit into the web of life? How should our developments in technology be deployed? What social contracts must be fashioned in the global economy which both generate more prosperity and care for those who become vulnerable? How do we develop mechanisms of governance equal to the

challenges which are now global in scope? What principles should guide our future leaders?

“The 1997 State of the World Forum will examine these questions at a time of immense transformation in human affairs, as one age gives way to another, and humanity is given the opportunity to rediscover itself.”

Garrison was followed by Marian Wright Edelman, president of the Children's Defense Fund, who presented an impassioned address, "My Defense of Children"; Walter Cronkite, who reminisced on "A Reporter's Life"; and Lewis Platt, Chairman and CEO of Hewlett-Packard, who issued an invitation for the next morning to take the Walk Thru Time as a context setter for the conference.

A range of subjects was covered during the five days of the Forum in a dozen or more plenary sessions and dialogue meetings, and in 24 roundtable themes, twice the number of last year. In addition to the new topics this year, the several on-going initiatives of the State of the World Forum were reviewed. General Lee Butler, former Commander, Strategic Air Command, noted that the chilling possibility of the accidental use of nuclear weapons persists, and called again for nuclear weapons states to eliminate once and for all these weapons which, he reiterated, have no military use.

The initiative to curb the worldwide arms trade was emphasized throughout the conference, from stories told by victims of indiscriminate arms sales, to the BBC telecast on the final day of the conference

with the testimony of Nobel Peace Laureate José Ramos-Horta. Ramos-Horta noted that he had joined other Nobel Peace Prize Laureates in the effort initiated by Oscar Arias, former president of Costa Rica, and announced at last year's State of the World Forum to put stringent restrictions on international arms sales.

In this issue of *Timeline*, we present a snapshot of a number of the subjects deliberated this year at the Forum, including a report on the three roundtable sessions organized and presented by members of the Foundation for Global Community.

In addition to our roundtable, some 60 members of the Foundation again worked as volunteer staff at the Forum, hosting visiting dignitaries, helping coordinate luncheons and roundtables, and assisting conference management, media support, and registration.

Co-moderator Lynne Twist

Co-moderator at the 1997 State of the World Forum, along with Jim Garrison, was Lynne Twist, Founding Executive and Director of Strategic Planning for the Hunger Project. She also serves on the boards of several humanitarian organizations and in 1994 was honored as Woman of Distinction at the United Nations by the International Health Awareness Network.

In opening remarks, Twist noted that, "What will define our success in the 21st century may not be security issues or even economic issues. It will be human issues—health, education, the eradication of hunger and poverty, the empowerment

of women, our ability to live in reverence with the natural environment, our tolerance and openness to diversity, collaboration, and accepting and understanding one another.

"The rules will be different; the heroes and heroines will be communities of freedom and networks of possibility rather than individuals standing alone. [In this Forum] half of us are men and half are women. Among us are 65 young people from 24 countries included as equals in all aspects of this gathering. We come to the Forum to participate in building those networks of possibility, those communities of freedom that will define the next age of humanity."



Excerpts from an Address by Walter Cronkite

Back at the beginning of our space program, our pioneer astronauts were returning from their missions as heroes, with ticker tape parades and receptions at the White House. And these sterling young pilots, well disciplined as they were, maintained steadfastly that their personal safety was never a matter of concern to them as they rode those fiery rockets into the inhospitable and dangerous environment of space. After all, each of them said, "We are test pilots, and this was just another test flight for us." Well, of course, that was ridiculous: clearly there was a lot more to it than that. Shortly after his flight, I asked my good friend Wally Schirra, "As

you lay there in that tiny Mercury capsule, the size of a telephone booth, and you waited for that rocket to go off, level with me, what were you really thinking?" Wally said, "Well, Walter, promise you'll never tell this, but I lay there and I looked at all those dials, and at those toggle switches I was supposed to throw, and at those buttons I was supposed to press, and I thought to myself, "Good gosh, this thing was built by the lowest bidder!"

I tell you this now because I have a terrible feeling that this world of ours is being run these days by the lowest bidder. Exceptions are far too rare to the prevailing fact that much of the world's leadership is motivated by profit. For the politician, the need to increase power, for whatever ends, many of them certainly not in the interest of humanity. For the industrialist, the businessman, the traders, the need to satisfy shareholders with ever-increasing revenue by whatever means, often by the exploitation of human misery.

In the ultimate, I ask myself, how can we call ourselves civilized when thousands of years after our emergence from the caves, we still believe that the way to settle arguments is to kill each other. The modern four horsemen of the apocalypse swing their sabers over all humankind: population, pollution, poverty, nuclear proliferation. The first three are already afflicting untold millions of human beings around the world, and the last, the threat of nuclear weapons, poses the possibility of unspeakable horror and perhaps the end of life as we know it.

Perhaps the time has come at last when real progress can be made toward the

amelioration, or perhaps the elimination, of the problems that already afflict too much of humanity and threaten the rest of us who in our ignorance believe that somehow we can remain immune.

In this country, as well in many others, we have some superb newspapers and television broadcasters. We also have many that live on sensationalism, on violence, sexual degradation, the total disrespect for human dignity—hardly examples for the developing world to follow. If you can bear it, just watch a series of commercials for coming television attractions and the latest blockbuster Hollywood films. It's a menu drenched in gunfire, explosions, and blood. And I don't think the use of gutter language is doing anything to improve our culture; it certainly is not fit for export.

Unfortunately here, as in most of the world's free-market countries, television news is often regarded not as an obligation by the owners, but as a profit center to be maintained and exploited. Most of the major TV news organizations today are but subsidiaries of giant entertainment enterprises. It seems evident that conflicts of interest between a news report and a conglomerate's financial investments are likely to be decided in favor of profit.

The bottom line already has dictated a potentially disastrous cut in the amount and quality of foreign news available to the American public. The networks have closed most of their foreign bureaus and cut to the bone their foreign coverage. The leadership position of the United States in the world, even if realized partly by default, demands constant attention to

the formulation and execution of foreign policy. And in a democracy, that implies the necessity of an informed electorate. It is thus the depth of irresponsibility, bordering on criminality, for the networks to reduce rather than enlarge their foreign coverage. In today's complex world, what appears a minor incident in the remotest of regions can blossom into a mushroom-shaped cloud. If ignorance stymies preventive action, what we don't know surely can kill us.

In our country, print and broadcast journalism today are blessed with the best educated reporters, writers, and editors ever. Publishers and broadcast executives should see that these dedicated journalists have the tools to do the job; more consideration must be given the editors, less the auditors. A profit is, of course, to be expected, but the custodianship of a nation's press is a sacred obligation to serve the public. The shareholders of the public corporations which now control the media should be educated to that responsibility so that they will be satisfied with rational profits and not expect the same exorbitant returns now fashionable from industry and commerce.



The Compassionate Society

A panel of four speakers moderated by Mahnaz Afkhami, former Minister of State for Women's Affairs in Iran, explored the concept of a compassionate society. One of the panelists was Mahbub ul Haq, President of the Human Development Centre, a policy think tank in Islamabad, Pakistan, devoted to

professional research on human development strategies in South Asia. He has held a number of high-level posts in Pakistan, including chief economist of the Pakistan Planning Commission, was for 12 years director of policy planning at the World Bank, and served as chief architect of UNDP's annual Human Development Reports.

Haq began by pointing out that today's global society is not a compassionate one. "We are quite fond of describing ourselves as one world, one planet, one humanity, one global society," he said. "But the blunt reality for many of us who come from poor lands is simply this: We are at least two worlds, two planets, two humanities, global societies—one embarrassingly rich and the other desperately poor—and the distance between them is widening, not narrowing."

Haq asked how we can call it a compassionate society when the richest one-fifth of the world consumes 80 percent of the world's natural resources and when it commands an income 78 times as high as the income of the poorest one-fifth of the world; when 800 million people go hungry every night and 160 million children are severely malnourished; when 1.3 billion people do not have access to even a simple necessity like safe drinking water; when a billion adults are illiterate, and 1.3 billion people survive in absolute poverty on less than \$1 day.

He cited the 134 million children in south Asia who work 16 hours a day in inhuman conditions for a wage of only 8 cents a day, and the plight of the women of the world who make up half of

humanity but are economically marginalized, politically ignored, and underrepresented in the world's parliaments.

“What kind of a compassionate society is it,” he asked, “when many desperately poor nations spend much more on arms than on the education and health of their people? Where the five permanent Security Council members supply 86 percent of arms to the poor nations, even giving handsome subsidies to their arms exporters? How brilliantly we have chosen the custodians of our global security!”

“What kind of a compassionate society is it,” he asked “where millions of landmines are strewn all over the world waiting for the unsuspecting victims, where it takes only \$3 to plant a mine but \$1000 to remove it, and where the treaty to ban landmines is ready, but the United States simply refuses to sign it?”

“What kind of a compassionate society is it,” he asked, “where we all recognize that nuclear weapons should never be used, and yet our leaders refuse to banish them because they are so fond of playing global parlor games?”

“The simple truth is that we are far from the ideal of a compassionate society today. But let us also be realistic. It is true that we may never be able to eliminate all social and economic injustices or to provide equality of opportunity to all the people. But we certainly can take a few practical steps to make a global society a little more compassionate, a little more humane.”

Haq then challenged his audience to organize themselves and create pressure for at least these six changes:

1. “Guarantee to every newborn child the birthright of immunization and primary education. No child should be doomed to a short or miserable life merely because the child happens to be born in the wrong country, or the wrong income class, or to be of the wrong sex. Education and immunizations can be provided to every child for hardly 3 billion dollars a year.

2. “Shift priorities to implement the 2020 Compact from the 1995 World Social Summit in Copenhagen which calls for developing nations to devote at least 20 percent of their existing national budgets, and for donor countries to earmark 20 percent of their existing aid budgets, for universal basic education, primary health care for all, safe drinking water, adequate nutrition for severely malnourished children, and family planning services for all willing couples.

3. “Empower people by providing them with microcredit so that they can find self-employment, self-respect, and can unleash their creative energy. (See *The Growth of Microenterprise* in this issue.)

4. “Establish a new code of conduct for arms sales to poor nations by supporting the initiative of former Costa Rican president Oscar Arias. This code of conduct, endorsed by 15 Nobel Peace Prize winners, proposes a ban on arms sales to authoritarian regimes, to potential trouble spots, and to the poorest nations. However, Oscar Arias has not been able to find a single member

of the UN General Assembly to sponsor this proposal.

“Why are generous export subsidies given by rich nations to their arms exporters? Why is your tax money used to export death and destruction to poor lands? It's no use coming here and making brilliant, eloquent speeches if we are not willing to organize and take even simple steps. Generate pressure to suspend these subsidies. And pressure the poor nations to cut their military expenditures by at least 5 percent a year. That alone will be enough to finance the entire social agenda that needs no foreign aid if they are willing to face up to the responsibility themselves and if they are willing to invest in people rather than in arms. That is what will make a compassionate society.

5. “Pledge to abolish global poverty in the 21st century, much as slavery was abolished a few centuries ago. Poverty is not inevitable: it belongs to the museum of history. But let us also recognize, before we are carried away by too much emotionalism, that poverty is not a mere flu. It is a body cancer. It requires determined economic and political action in the poor nations, including redistribution of assets and credits, provision of adequate social services—particularly education and health—and generation of real growth that benefits the poor and doesn't only increase national income.

“Abolishing poverty must become a collective international responsibility because human life is not safe in the rich nations if human despair exists in the poor nations. Let us recognize that consequences of global poverty today

travel across national frontiers without a passport in very ugly forms, in the form of drugs and HIV, AIDS, pollution, and terrorism.

6. “Return the United Nations to the people of the world in whose name it was first created. Today the UN is an intergovernmental body with the voice of the people seldom heard. Even in international conferences and summits, the presence of NGOs is token, and many dark curtains separate your representatives from real decision-making forums. We at least need a two-chamber general assembly in the UN, with one chamber nominated by the governments, as at present, with exalted ambassadors of the world, and the other chamber elected directly by the people and by institutions of civil society. This would insure that the voice of the people is heard on all critical issues which affect the future.

“Though many more steps are needed, I mention these six simple steps because I believe these are eminently realistic. But let me state quite clearly: building a compassionate society is not a technocratic exercise. It requires solid ethical and moral foundations. It requires certainly a new way of thinking, thinking about ourselves as a human family and not just as a collection of nation states. And it requires a new concept of human security which is founded on human dignity and not on weapons of war.

“In the last analysis, human security means a child who did not die, a disease that did not spread, an ethnic tension that did not explode, a dissident who was not silenced, a human spirit that was not crushed. That is human security. And

imperatives of this human security have become today universal, indivisible, and truly global."



Human Organizations as Complex Adaptive Systems

At this year's Forum, organizers designed the proceedings to start with the largest context by having participants take the Walk Thru Time. Natural follow-ons were presentations on the emergence of a new culture appropriate to the 21st century, and by a presentation on the science of complexity as applied to human organizations.

Exploring this latter subject—the science of complex adaptive systems—provided the possibility of reframing the study of other, more specific issues in a larger and different context, with the possibility of new, previously unseen, solutions emerging.

Introduction

—Linda Gioja and Richard Pascale

“The notion of ‘emergence’ is central to the science of complexity. It studies phenomena in which many independent agents interact in parallel with each other in a rich variety of ways and, following simple rules, spontaneously self-organize into something that is qualitatively different.

“Life emerges from the interactions of proteins and nucleic acids; consciousness emerges from the interactions of neurons; economies and societies emerge from the interactions of individuals. And not only do these systems self-organize—they adapt. They modify their structure or behavior in response to changes in the environment. This capacity for ‘learning’ is a distinguishing trait of complex adaptive systems.”

An Experience in Complex Adaptive Systems —Richard Pascale

In this session, we were each given a paddle, which was red on one side and green on the other. High in the front corners of the room were cameras connected to computers that could register the color of any paddles that were held up. To show us this, grids were projected on screens at the front of the room and, by holding up our paddles and turning them back and forth, we could see the computer registering them (we knew our contribution made a difference). Then we were told we would “fly” a plane with our paddles (independent agents acting in parallel). The right side of the room would control up or down (green, up; red, down), and the left side, left and right (simple instructions, immediate feedback). On the screens it was as if we were looking through the windshield of the “plane” and there were turn and climb indicators as well. The presenter had the throttle and asked us to take off, avoid the mountains, look around for the yellow targets, and fly the plane through the targets (clear goal). We started a little awkwardly, but gained proficiency and

did the task successfully, having a visceral experience of spontaneous self-organization to accomplish a fairly complex task.

Adapting Complex Systems Theory to a Social Problem —Richard Pascale

“If emerging complexity is an emerging condition, then you want to design for it. Emergence stimulates our interest in what is already occurring in the system that could be amplified. One of the lessons of complexity is that the amplification of certain kinds of disturbance or feedback in a system causes that system to evolve to its next level of capacity for richer functioning. This technique is called amplifying ‘positive deviance.’ ”

An example of this related to finding a solution to malnourished children in an area of Vietnam. Aid workers located what was already emerging in the system by looking for well-nourished children and discovering why they were healthy. It turned out that their parents were adding locally available grasses and shellfish to the staple rice diet of their children. By using these families as examples, the aid workers spread this innovation throughout the area, dramatically improving children’s health without the need for outside technology or food.

Some Personal Learnings from Complexity Theory —Margaret Wheatley

“We, like other complex adaptive systems, are messy networks of

relationships. Through our local connections and paying attention to some local rules and paying attention to one another, we create more order and more effectiveness in the world. Organization is a naturally occurring phenomenon.

“As humans, when we are asked to participate in anything, the extent to which we want to participate really depends on whether we think our contribution matters. All life in human organizations is around how invested we can be with the meaning of what we’re trying to bring forth. And that meaning is never explained in an algorithm. This is where we depart in a significant way from any of the computer simulations that teach us important things about complex adaptive systems. Self-organization, the ability to create structures and processes that fit the need of the moment, is an incredible force and energy on the face of this planet that has not only created five billion years of history but it has brought all of us to this room.

“I’ve learned that this is a relational universe and that human beings seek out one another. And we really have to honor what the Dalai Lama has called ‘our infinite altruism’—that we seek each other out to self-organize to bring more good into the world. How we do that always looks like messy networks of relationships around questions that matter, around meaning. It never looks like an organization chart. It never looks like a policy and procedures manual. Living networks always form these messy entanglements of relationships out of which order and effectiveness are possible.

“Now how can any of this help us as we go forth trying to bring more good into the world? I’ve learned it’s all about networks of conversations that matter. Most of the world’s great efforts began with simple conversations among friends because a few of them had passion for a topic. And then what do we do with that energy and passion? People come together and they form an organization, and then they forget about complexity theory and go back to command and control. So what happens is that we come together because we have a passion and then we form an organization that starts creating itself in very old ways around policies and procedures and rules and structure. Very shortly thereafter, the organization becomes the major block for us fulfilling our passion. So one of the great lessons from complexity theory is how we create an organization that doesn’t over-structure itself. How do we actually trust in the self-organizing capability of the cosmos? How do we trust one another so that we don’t create structures and policies that are based on controlling one another?”

Lessons from the Universe —Linda Gioja and Richard Pascale

I As a general rule, complex adaptive systems are at risk when in equilibrium. Equilibrium equates with death.

II Complex adaptive systems exhibit the capacity of self-organization and emergent complexity, i.e., producing a sum greater than the parts. Self-organization arises from intelligence in the nodes. Emergent complexity is generated by the propensity of simple

structures to generate novel patterns and infinite variety.

III Complex adaptive systems move to the edge of chaos to solve complex tasks. When such a system reaches a temporary peak, it must then “go down to go up”—it must be pulled by competitive pressures far enough out of its usual arrangements before it can create substantially different forms and carve out a more evolved basin of attraction.

IV One cannot direct a living system, only disturb it. Complex adaptive systems are characterized by weak cause/effect linkages. Phase transitions occur in the realm where one relatively small and isolated variation can produce huge effects. Alternatively, large changes may have little effect.



Emerging Leaders

Sixty five Youth Fellows from 24 countries took part in the Emerging Leaders Initiative at this year’s Forum. In previous years, young people have been invited to participate in parallel youth forums, but this year they were fully incorporated into the Forum’s program, speaking on panels and participating in roundtable and luncheon discussions. The youth, who ranged from 14 to 26 years of age, were chosen for their interest in the issues discussed at the Forum and for their involvement in organizations where they live. Many of the youth representatives have founded their own organizations, such as

Craig Kielburger, a 14-year-old Canadian, who started Save the Children after hearing the story of a 12-year-old slave boy who had been murdered for standing up for the rights of children in Bangladesh. And Danijella Zunec who, together with other youth from war-torn Croatia, started a group called the Post Pessimists in order to foster understanding between the warring groups. Then there was Mavis Gruver who publishes her own magazine, *New Moon: The Magazine for Girls and Their Dreams*. Others of the Emerging Leaders are involved in student groups on college campuses, are interns for organizations in Washington, or are active in environmental and social causes.

One thing all the youth at the Forum seemed to have in common was the confidence that what they are doing makes a difference. They were outspoken and very interested in the many perspectives offered. They brought something intangible but vital to the Forum—a sense of hope and a real presence of the future.

State of the World Forum Audiotapes

A complete listing of audiotapes of the State of the World Forum is available from Sounds True. Call 800-333-9185 or write to P.O. Box 8010, Boulder, Colorado 80306.



COSMOLOGY, CULTURE, AND CULTURAL CHANGE

— Lisa Friedman

When the theme for the 1997 State of the World Forum was announced as “Toward a New Civilization,” Foundation for Global Community proposed the creation of a roundtable series to be called Cosmology, Culture, and Cultural Change. This would be the first step in a four-year initiative in collaboration with the State of the World Forum. The purpose of the initiative is to facilitate the evolution and emergence of a collective consciousness with a set of values, attitudes, and behaviors for the 21st century—an integral culture.

Our proposal was accepted, and at this year’s Forum the Foundation convened a series of three interactive roundtables, bringing together a diverse group of thinkers, authors, and practitioners who could each address integral culture from a different perspective. Speakers were challenged to be “thought-provokers” rather than traditional presenters. Their role was to “provoke” or call forth ideas and understanding from the roundtable participants. Participants were asked to see themselves as an important part of a working group, as part of a collective thinking process designed to bring the best group intelligence to the emergence of integral culture.

The three roundtables were designed to pose fundamental questions for participants to consider: “Who are we and where have we come from?” “Where are we going?” and “How are we going to get there?” Ideas and examples from

all thought-provokers and participants ultimately contributed to the overall understanding that emerged. This eight-page section includes an outline of presenters and their topics, together with a synthesis of the story that emerged from the group as a whole.

Roundtable I

THE CONTEXT FOR INTEGRAL CULTURE

Addressing the first two questions, "Who are we and where have we come from?" were the following thought-provokers: Brian Swimme, professor of Mathematical Cosmology at the California Institute of Integral Studies and co-author with Thomas Berry of *The Universe Story*; Elisabet Sahtouris, evolution biologist, futurist, and author of *EarthDance*; Richard Tarnas, author of *The Passion of the Western Mind*; Phillip Bogdonoff, vice president for programs at the Millennium Institute; Daniel Yankelovich, president of Public Agenda, which interprets trends shaping American society; and Will Keepin, co-director of the Colorado Institute for a Sustainable Future.

Roundtable 2

PRINCIPLES OF INTEGRAL CULTURE

Thought-provokers at the second roundtable session included Richard Tarnas; Paul Ray, sociologist and author of *The Integral Culture Survey*; Mark Luyckx, project coordinator of the Forward Studies Unit of the European

Commission; Charlene Spretnak, author of *Resurgence of the Real*; and Barbara Lee, researcher, consultant, and author of *Mind over Media*.

Roundtable 3

THE PROCESS OF CULTURAL CHANGE

The third and final roundtable addressed the question, "How are we going to get there?" Thought-provokers were Elisabet Sahtouris; Richard Brodie, author of *Virus of the Mind*; Charlie Mae Knight, superintendent, Ravenswood School District; Daniel Yankelovich; and Lisa Friedman, strategy and change management consultant and author of *The Dynamic Enterprise*.

The roundtable format emphasized dialogue and discussion. Each thought-provoker gave a brief formal presentation, and most of them attended all three roundtables and were active participants throughout.

Although their presentations were brief, the thought provokers were still able to describe the current ecological, cultural, and spiritual crisis and set this current moment in the context of the 15-billion-year history of the unfolding universe, the five-billion-year story of life on Earth, and the five-thousand-year history of Western civilization. This provided the participants with a rich context that stimulated deep thought and lively discussion in both small and large group settings.

Results of the Roundtables

There was unanimous agreement among the group that we are living in the midst of a profound transformation, in a time of shifting world views. This is not a simple change in magnitude or a different form of achieving the same goals within our existing culture.

The times in which we live are truly transformational because our existing understanding of the world in which we live—our cosmology—is changing dramatically.

Recent scientific discoveries and theories give us a new view of who we are and where we have come from. Our still-new knowledge of the universe story—the story of how the physical universe began and continues to unfold—illustrates the magnificent nature of our 15-billion-year history. This story is filled with increasing complexity, diversity, and new levels of order. It is a story of unfolding beauty, destruction, crisis, and creativity.

In the way we currently understand this story, “the all-nourishing abyss” gave rise to space, energy, and matter; these continued to unfold into increasingly complex orders of particles, atoms, molecules, stars, galaxies, clusters of galaxies, new stars with complex molecules, planets, organic molecules, and ultimately life as we know it. To this day, we continue to be sustained by the “generosity” of the physical universe (as the sun enables life on Earth by giving us 40 million tons of energy each second).

We learned that our biological evolution followed this same path of increasing diversity and order, destruction, and

creativity. Life faced many crises and even extinctions, often taking up to one hundred million years to recover its biodiversity. There have been five mass extinctions, eliminating 50-90 percent of all species alive on Earth at the time. Each round of destruction was followed by a blossoming of new life and ever more complex levels of order. We have moved from simple cells, to multi-created cells (when early organisms moved inside other cells and still exist there today in our own complex cells), to multi-celled creatures. We are now on the verge of evolving a whole new level of order, an even more complex multi-created cell, as humans begin to consciously understand themselves as part of a larger, connected, global living system.

Our human culture has evolved along with our worldview. If we look back over our entire human history, we can see the broad sweeps of distinct worldviews lasting over thousands of years time. In premodern times, humans lived integrated with nature and with their gods in a world they experienced as enchanted. God was everywhere—in the fertile earth, in the trees, the mountains, the winds. Relationships among people were based on the more archetypally feminine values, on immersion in nature, intuitive perception, interconnectedness, cooperation, and collaboration. (The group had quite a few heated discussions on the meaning of “feminine” and “masculine,” and kept reminding itself that these are the deep, symbolic, archetypal values our culture has attributed to each gender!)

As our more modern, analytic, intellectual thought began to emerge,

people began to see themselves as separate from nature. God was extracted from nature as well—moved over time to reside in the distant heavens rather than in the day-to-day immediacy of the physical world. In addition to the boundaries placed between humans, God, and nature, the rational Western worldview created separations between mind and body, between intellect and emotion, between men and women, among nations, and among diverse ethnic groups and cultures. Hierarchies of power and status enforced these separations as those "higher up" controlled those "below." The world was dominated by an archetypal mechanistic and masculine worldview, based on rationality, analytic thought, critical intellect, and an orientation to action.

This modernist worldview has led us to the current Western consumer culture, a culture based on "economism." The natural world is seen as large and separate from us, perhaps even limitless, and certainly indestructible. Given this understanding of the world, turning Earth's resources into goods for people to consume, which in turn fuels national and global economies, is considered a positive goal for human endeavor. Wealth of individuals and nations is measured by material possessions that can be purchased or accumulated and that can be quantitatively counted in monetary terms (e.g., the gross national product). The world itself is conceptualized as a global marketplace.

From one perspective, the development of human reason has led us from ignorance to increasing freedom, knowledge, and well-being. From another perspective, this progress is "a

tragic story of a fall from the original state of relative unity and sense of interconnectedness between humans, nature, and the spiritual dimension of existence." This separation has brought about "an increasingly destructive human exploitation of nature, the devastation of traditional cultures, and an increasingly unhappy state of the human soul, ever more isolated, shallow, and unfulfilled."

A New Emerging Worldview

Our cosmology is changing dramatically. Our understanding of the evolution of the cosmos and of the diversity of life itself is now leading us to a less human-centered worldview.

Many people are beginning to shift their attention from the quantity of material resources and goods they could possess or consume to the quality of their connections and relationships: relationships with their own inner and spiritual values, with each other, with their communities, with other cultures, and with the larger living system. Duane Elgin calls this a time of the "awakening Earth"; John Cobb, Jr., calls it "Earthism"; Paul Hawken refers to it as "the restorative era"; and Paul Ray describes an emerging "integral culture." In this new worldview, wealth is measured by the quality of these fundamental relationships, and the world is viewed as more than a marketplace.

Our Current Moment

We are living in a time of growing ecological destruction. Exponential growth in human population and

consumption is dominating Earth's resources, many believe beyond carrying capacity. At our current population, humans have already transformed almost half of the land on Earth into deserts, pastures, farms, and cities. We have increased the atmospheric concentration of carbon dioxide by nearly 30 percent since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution. According to some experts, half of all accessible fresh water is now used by humans; a quarter of bird species are now extinct; each day we lose 104 additional species to extinction; and the time until a third of species alive today will be extinct is shockingly low: nine years.

In the roundtable many people were struck by the fact that at the very moment we may be poised on the brink of extinction, we have also developed the scientific tools—and the empathic and intuitive capabilities—to become aware of the danger. (Were any other species conscious before the earlier mass extinctions? Did they have the capacity to understand what was happening to them, to feel something about it, to communicate with each other, to plan and to act in collaboration with each other?)

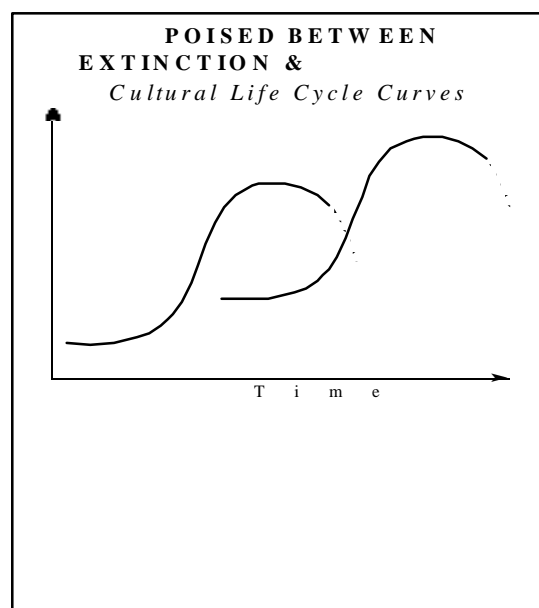
At this critical moment of crisis, we are also simultaneously at the threshold of a new worldview. A cosmology of interconnectedness is emerging that leads us to a new culture, an integral culture that can potentially reconnect us with nature, with our spiritual values, with our communities, and with each other.

What a moment! As we approach the millennium, we seem poised between catastrophe and possibility; between

empty and unsustainable consumerism and reconnection with our deepest values, with the natural world, and with each other. We are poised between extinction and renaissance.

Living in Two Worlds

An image was used to help people visualize our current moment of transformation and the degree of change required.



| | |
|----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Modernist Economism | Integral Culture |
| Separation | Reconnection |
| Fragmentation | Integration, Whole |
| Mechanistic | Organic, dynamic living system |
| Hierarchical | Self-organizing, adaptive |
| “Human-centric” | Part of the larger living system |

The life cycle of a culture can be represented by a bell-shaped curve which illustrates the phases of development. Growth appears slow (or even negative) in the early start-up phase of a new, emerging culture. If a culture succeeds in

meeting both internal and external demands, it moves into a phase of accelerated growth which then levels off as it matures. Some cultures progress toward a point of choice, where they either move into decline and potential demise, or make a strategic leap toward breakthrough and renewal and an entirely new worldview.

It seems clear from our story so far that we are in a time of the transformational leap between the two overlapping curves. We are not discussing more of the same, or even a new, improved version of the same, along one curve or the other. We are talking about a discontinuous, dramatic, and complex transformation in our worldview and our culture.

The curves also help to illustrate how we currently have two cultures in operation simultaneously. The modernist, materialist culture of economism is a powerful engine that dominates our Western societies. But given the environmental data, this culture does not look as if it can take us successfully into the future since it is not realistically sustainable. However, we are already seeing the emergence of a new, fledgling, start-up of an integral culture. We don't yet know how our lives would look in this new culture. What kind of economy would an integral culture have? What kind of jobs, transportation systems, housing, entertainment, or education would exist? How would people relate to each other in an integral culture?

The shift from the modernist to an integral culture must take place at all levels. All areas in the culture need to move across the curves, to make the leap from one to the other. All roles,

relationships, and institutions would be redefined within an integral culture.

The Vision of Integral Culture

The discussion groups began to fill in the vision for the second curve, for where we are going and what an integral culture would look like.

An integral culture is seen as a vibrant Earth community. . .

- That moves from fragmentation to wholeness
- That embraces the creativity of diversity
- Where doing emerges from being
- Where leadership engages and involves people
- Where relatedness is fundamental
- That offers opportunity and possibility, a “new renaissance.”

What is Needed for Transformation?

Our worldviews, our deepest cultural assumptions, are typically very difficult to change. Most often, people are not even aware of their cultural point of view. It is like the air we breathe, all around us and invisible. Alan Thein Durning describes how worldviews “sit down deep in human consciousness somewhere, quietly shaping reactions to new ideas and information, guiding decisions, and ordering expectations for the future.”

What would make this cultural transformation more likely to occur?

1. Seeing the whole picture

First, people would need to understand the larger picture. We need an integrated view of multiple changes occurring at once, in a simple form we can understand and discuss with others. In large-scale and complex changes, one group of people typically sees one area of the overall map while other groups see other areas.

People also need a clear understanding of why the present culture cannot take us where we need to go. We need to know what to let go of and why. We need to experience the “push” from the old culture.

In addition, people need a clear vision of the future possibility, a way to understand what the future is demanding of us, and what kind of change is required. We need a vision that can motivate us, inspire us to look deep inside and find the best within ourselves, a vision that gives hope and motivates new actions. We need to be “pulled” toward the future.

2. Changing Memes, the “Cultural DNA”

Genetic evolution occurs through the self-replication of DNA. Culture can evolve much more quickly. The term “memes” has been coined to describe those ideas that create our culture and are the vehicle for its evolution. Memes are the attractive, catchy ideas that self-replicate as individuals pass them along to others, who in turn spread them still further.

In order for our culture to evolve from the current modernist, economic worldview to an integral culture, we must develop the memes for the new culture. Ideas or images that help give us perspective on our current culture can be quite helpful. We can begin to see it as a conscious choice we are making and not just assume it is the only way to be. These include images such as “affluenza” or “human-centric.”

Other images seemed to point the way to the new culture, such as: “enough,” “less is more,” “reconnection,” “wealth is relationship,” or “the planet as a living system.” These are just a few of the powerful images that seem to be appearing in multiple ways in multiple places, that indicate the way to an integral culture.

3. Mobilizing the three drivers of change: aligning leadership, engaging people, and providing support for change

Understanding the larger and compelling context of where we have come from, where we are, and where we are going provides a clearer understanding and map to create the future culture. However, this map is still only a blueprint. People must enact the changes and build the future together.

Participants in the third and final roundtable looked at the new role of leaders. We need leaders from the first curve (see chart, above), who can lead people across to the new culture. And we need leaders who lead from the second curve, who already embody the new values and behaviors.

Our discussion groups generated the ideas that in an integral culture, “spirit is the boss” and “the mission is the leader.” People together create the mission from their deepest beliefs, and leaders emerge as needed in service of the mission. In fact, leaders help to engage a broad-based group of people to take up the roles to help fulfill the mission. Many people would bring gifts in service of the mission. In an integral culture, “everyone leads.”

People moving from one culture to the other also need support to make the changes required. One discussion group focused on what our State of the World Forum initiative itself could provide for people in the midst of change. They came up with many creative ideas, including: spreading memes, teaching, writing, training, forming dialogue and support groups, connecting with others through the Internet, and forming alliances and a network for change.

Conclusions

By the end of the roundtables, we were left with the impression that so much that we love is more in danger than we could ever have imagined, and that we also bring more beautiful and creative potential for new possibilities than we could have imagined. We were left seeing both, simultaneously.

We were also left with intriguing questions: What if the transformation to an integral culture is not just an interesting theoretical exercise? What if this transformation is essential? What if our soul and perhaps even the future of life on our planet depend on it? What would we do?

A team of people at the Foundation conceived and planned these three roundtable sessions. At the Forum itself, Richard Rathbun served as moderator, Michael Abkin was host, Herman Gyr was facilitator, and Lisa Friedman was a presenter/thought-provoker.



Should Crimes Against Humanity Be Forgiven?

At the State of the World Forum in 1995, Zbigniew Brzezinski said, “In this century, upwards of 200 million people have been sacrificed on the altar of ideology and war.” This year, moderator Jim Garrison stated, “The question before us is not why we commit these crimes, but can we forgive them?” He then introduced the five members of the panel “who have lived through the intensity of human cruelty.”

Eva Morales has watched the kidnapping of many members of her family. “Kidnap means the military or secret police come to your house, take the person away, and you never see them again.” Together with other women, she organized the first human rights group in Guatemala. Many of its members were killed or tortured. “One woman was taken with her baby. They pulled the baby's nails out.” In 1986, Morales met with members of Human Rights Watch. After that she was forced into exile. “Forgiveness to me is just a word. How can I forgive someone or the government who has taken my family away? Who took my childhood away? I won't give up until I find my father, my brother and

other members of my family or their bones. My last hope now is that they are dead because otherwise I would think they are being tortured at this moment. I don't want what happened to me to happen to anyone in Guatemala or any other country."

Miki Jacevic grew up in Sarajevo and before the war in Bosnia was president of the UN youth group in that city. "I am living proof that people in the Balkans do not hate and do not kill each other all the time. Otherwise I would not be here. My mother is a Christian and my father is a Muslim. I'm just one example of co-existence and life in Sarajevo." Jacevic told several stories of life during the war.

One day he was going to get water, together with his friend Sascha and Sascha's mother. Shells began to fall on the city and one struck the mother, killing her instantly. "Sascha was like in a trance. He ran to his mother, took off his jacket, and began putting pieces of her body on the jacket. Then he said to me, 'Let's go, I have to show this to my brother.' " Despite his experiences, Jacevic still has hope that we could live together and start forgiving. "I do feel that it is obligatory and necessary that we forgive. My personal story is that I'm not ready right now. I don't want to say that in ten years I will not be able to, but at this time I have a very hard time, and I think about people like Radovan Karadzic and other acclaimed war criminals who are still running the country and still into politics."

Today, Jacevic is working on a Ph.D. in conflict resolution at George Mason University and is a member of BosniaNet, an association of NGOs

whose work is related to children in Bosnia.

Alexander Yakovlev lived through the purges of Stalin and was asked by Mikhail Gorbachev to chair the Presidential Commission on the Rehabilitation of Political Prisoners. "I would like to talk about the Russians as one big nation. After the revolution, we had a civil war where about 30 million were killed. Relatives were killing each other. Brothers were killing brothers. After that, Russia underwent the great purges—purges of Stalin's time—which killed about 15 million people. We cannot really tell you how many people were killed. It's impossible. Even today, we find cemeteries where we do not know who is buried there. In World War II more than 30 million Russians were killed. In the first months of the war more than 4 million were killed or captured. They were prisoners of war. What is more scary, is that when these prisoners of war returned back to the Soviet Union from the concentration camps located in Germany, they were sent into exile to build chemical plants, to build other plants which were very harmful to health. After the war, different political campaigns started in the Soviet Union—anti-semitism, anti-cosmopolitanism, etc. I'm not going to bore you to death with numbers and facts and details. There are millions and millions, but I'd like to say the following: We do not know what has happened to us. Under those conditions, to contemplate who is to blame and who is not is just to avoid the answer. Obviously, Lenin and Stalin are criminals. But to say that only they are to blame and that we are pure—we are not to blame about that— is not proper.

From the period of 1923 to 1953—only on the territory of the Russian Federation—more than 42 million people were imprisoned (which makes up half of the population of the Russian Federation). Who was killing people in the civil war? We did. Who was arresting people during the great purges? Who was killing people? We did. Who was informing on the neighbor? Who was putting people in prisons? We did.

"I truly believe that Lenin and Stalin were at the same time using our indifference and lack of conscience. Is it a question of an 'eye for an eye,' or as the great Russian writer, Leo Tolstoy said, 'indifference to evil is violence'? I think this question will remain forever. Legally, I think it's right that today we are blaming someone else. But from the moral standpoint, we should blame ourselves. And I think the time is coming. I believe that without the moral purification of all of us, without cleansing our souls, nothing is going to happen. Today, we call ourselves a civilized people. But when a person kills another person, we do not have the right to call ourselves civilized."

Arn Chorn Pond was taken away by the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia in 1975 and imprisoned with other children between the ages of 6 and 15. They had little or no food for weeks at a time and were forced to watch continual executions. "They killed three or four times a day. More than 500 were killed. I could not understand why they do that. I learned to shut myself off because if you show any emotion they will also kill you." Five youngsters were told to learn to play the flute. Arn and one other child succeeded; the three that failed were killed along

with the teacher. "When Vietnam invaded Cambodia in 1979, we were forced to fight. If we refused, we were killed. I felt helpless. I wanted to scream so hard. It's the worst feeling I've ever had." Arn was the first Cambodian orphan allowed into the United States in 1980. In 1984, at the age of 18, he joined others in co-founding Children of War, an international youth leadership development organization. He has spoken before the U.S. Congress, the United Nations, and traveled around the world for Amnesty International.

Jose Ramos-Horta received the 1996 Nobel Peace Prize for his work toward a just and peaceful solution to the conflict in East Timor. More than 200,000 East Timorese have been killed during the 21 years of Indonesian occupation. "In a conflict where you are a player, you cannot also be the prosecutor and judge. Too many parties have responsibility in the conflict in East Timor: Indonesia which invaded our country; President Gerald Ford and Secretary Kissinger who were there 12 hours before the invasion; 90 percent of the weapons used in the invasion were supplied by the United States. But do I blame the U.S.? I was always a great admirer of the U.S. as a kid. It is the supply of weapons—the immoral weapons trade—by the major powers, by the industrialized countries, to the Third World, that has cost so many lives.

"You ask a question: Should great crimes against humanity be forgiven? I ask another question: Are the culprits of the great crimes prepared to apologize? It is a show of maturity, it is a show of our own greatness, if we are humbled to say 'we apologize for what happened to

you.' For this would be the beginning of the process of reconciliation, the process of forgiveness. Forgiveness is not an act of legislation and cannot be something legislated by a court, by an international tribunal. It has to be an act of the heart.” Today, Ramos-Horta lives in exile and is a visiting professor at the law school of the University of New South Wales in Sydney, Australia. He is seeking a referendum for East Timor’s independence from Indonesia.



How Toxics Affect Our Children

Repeated evidence from wildlife populations reveals that some man-made chemicals the mother shares with her offspring before birth or shortly after can have a devastating effect. Now there are emerging signals from human populations that intelligence and reproductive and immune systems of human offspring are being affected. Panel moderator **Michael Lerner**, president and founder of Commonweal, a health and environmental research institute, asked, "Do children have a right to be toxin-free? Do mothers have a right to a toxin-free pregnancy? I believe that this will become a central agenda for the women's rights movement, and that environmental health is going to come up alongside mind/body health as one of the great grassroots movements of our time.”

Opening the discussion was **Theo Colburn**, co-author of *Our Stolen Future* (see *Timeline*, July/August 1996),

a book which alerted the world to the threat posed by endocrine disrupters. Dr. Colburn stated: "There is overwhelming evidence that every child, no matter where in the world he or she is born, will be exposed not only from birth, but from conception, to man-made chemicals that can undermine the child's ability to reach its fullest potential. These chemicals interfere with the natural chemicals that tell tissues how to develop and construct healthy, whole individuals according to the genes they inherited from their mothers and fathers.

“Our children’s endocrine, immune, and reproductive systems cannot be reprogrammed, nor their brains rewired. The most well-intentioned individuals working diligently to improve a child's social and physical environment cannot undo what may have been determined during those 266 prenatal days when the construction of a child’s brain can be undermined.”

J. Routt Reigart, professor of Pediatrics at the Medical University of South Carolina, and chairman of the board of directors for the Children’s Environmental Health Network, observed: “We are presently confronted with a massive, uncontrolled experiment that we have inflicted on our children without their consent. It is one of the responsibilities of pediatricians to speak out in opposition to this uncontrolled experimentation with our children as the test animals.”

Nicholas Ashford, professor of Technology and Policy at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and advisor to the United Nations Environmental Program, added: “Both

because of a lack of clear markers and the separation of initiating exposure and ultimate disease, it is technically—and therefore politically—difficult to establish proof sufficient to regulate chemicals in industrial processes or to compensate the victims of chemical injuries. For this reason, we must seriously consider the adoption of what is called ‘the precautionary principle.’ This is in effect in the European regulatory system. It means erring on the side of caution.

“For industry, this means coming to terms with the new reality and developing or adopting sustainable technology to replace the old. For the insurance industry, it means becoming knowledgeable about causes of increases in health care that have been hidden from view. For government, it means a return to the role of government as a trustee for the environment, trustee for public health, and trustee for sustainable technology—rather than arbitrator or mediator of conflicts between industry and environmentalists. For the media, it means an increased commitment to understanding, communicating, reporting, and educating the public about the truth. For NGOs, it means coalition-building and agendas that join disparate issues among the various groups. For the international community, it means the commitment to research. For private wealth, it means support for independent science, support for advocacy, support of education of the public, and support for political action.”

Tom Spencer, chairman of the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee of the European Parliament, and international president of Global Legislators for a Balanced Environment (GLOBE),

concluded: "This is going to be a difficult issue because it contains new science. Worse than that, it contains a new concept: that it's the timing, not the dose. That's easy to say, but it's counter-intuitive. We all feel somehow that if you have a big dollop of something, it's going to do you more harm than a little dollop—and we're not talking about dollops but about parts-per-trillion.

“The question of alternatives is difficult—the threat is coming from so many chemicals in so many combinations. And financial compensation to chemical industries will also be difficult because for some of the chemicals the cash flow is absolutely huge. We have got to encourage the chemical industry to take a lesson from the tobacco industry who woke up one morning to discover the ultimate management nightmare: a staple of society—a cigarette—had suddenly been declared a poison. We have got to help the chemical industry. There are good people in the chemical industry who are concerned about this issue. We have got to help them get beyond the response which says 'challenge the science, challenge the scientists, when you fail with that, challenge the cost, and when you fail on that, challenge the practicality of any legislation in the field.' ”



The Potential Child/ Endangered Child Initiative

To deal with the problems endangering children physically and developmentally in today's world, the Forum launched an

initiative to identify and study successful prevention and intervention programs worldwide. Panel speakers were: **Marian Wright Edelman**, founder and president of the Children’s Defense Fund and convener of the Forum’s roundtables on children’s issues, who spoke about the unmet basic needs of children for security, housing, and food; **Jane Goodall**, whose life-long study of chimpanzee behavior has resulted in a body of knowledge about the fundamental requirements for healthy maturation that applies equally to humans; actor **Rob Reiner**, who spoke about the need to link programs to current research that shows the importance of early childhood experience; and **Stanley Greenspan**, clinical professor of Psychiatry, Behavioral Science, and Pediatrics, George Washington University.

Dr. Greenspan is also supervising child psychoanalyst at the Washington Psychoanalytic Institute and chairman of the Interdisciplinary Council on Developmental and Learning Disorders. He founded Zero To Three, a national center for babies and their families, was former director of the National Institute of Mental Health’s Clinical Infant Development arm, and is author of more than 100 articles and 27 books. He warned that the choices we make—or do not make—will have an unprecedented affect on subsequent generations. “In light of what we know now, the challenges we face are even more enormous than we have realized.

“Here’s the sobering question: Will the future generations be made up of individuals who are reflective and thoughtful, creative, warm, and

nurturing, capable of rearing their own children, capable of working in communities toward consensus and toward solutions? Or will those future generations be made up of individuals who are impulsive, self-centered, and polarized in their thinking so that they think in all-or-nothing ways and therefore are prone to violence, prone to helplessness, prone to passivity?

“The next 25 years will determine the individuals who will populate the future. If we make the wrong choices, the individuals of the future won’t have the reflective ability to be aware of what we can be aware of today.

“We, today, have the knowledge to make choices. We know how the brain and mind grow and develop. For example, in recent years we’ve discovered things we’ve known clinically, by observation: To grow healthily, the mind and the brain need early experiences. And we’ve discovered what kind of experiences these are, and that the right kind of sights and sounds actually wire the brain. The genes only set a general blueprint; the specifics are determined after we are born, so that we can adapt to our environment. But the wrong kind of stimulation, the wrong kind of input can lead to problems, can lead to brains that don’t function well, can lead to minds that are concrete and polarized and violence-prone.

“Now we have been able to pinpoint the types of experiences that are most valuable for that growing brain and mind. We call these experiences *the irreducible needs of children*:

“FIRST: Physical protection and care in which the right kinds of sights and sounds are available. This sounds easy, but we are already in hot water. We are not providing good care and protection. When the environment is toxic, it is an insult to this first basic need because the nervous system cannot grow properly. Also, chaotic and overwhelming environments undermine the baby’s ability to take in the kinds of sights and sounds needed for development.

“SECOND: Ongoing, long-term relationships that support a sense of trust, a sense of joy, a sense of optimism, the ability to relate to others, the ability to participate in families and communities. Here we’re not doing too well. We need to do better.

“THIRD: Interactions that are tailored to the individual differences in the nervous systems of children. One of the major discoveries of the last ten years is that each nervous system is unique and different. We need to tailor experiences to individual differences, and we are seeing individual differences in increasingly extreme forms—like attentional problems and developmental learning disabilities—that are harder and harder to work with.

“FOURTH: Interactions that promote development specifically through each of the developmental stages. We have discovered just recently that it is not cognitive stimulation in the traditional sense that helps children master different developmental stages; it is emotional interactions. In every stage, thinking ability is based on early emotional interactions and not on cognitive stimulation. Creative thinking, reality

testing, logical reflective thinking—each is learned through pretend play, in bouncing ideas off someone else, in debates and opinion-oriented conversations; not through educational toys, not even through books, as valuable as these are.

“FIFTH: Every child needs limits and expectations.

“SIXTH: A child needs to grow up in communities and societies and cultures that are supportive, that are ongoing, that are in touch with their own histories and are protected and autonomous.

“I believe that we are at an evolutionary crossroads. We know what to do, but more and more we are involved in practices that erode healthy minds instead of building healthy minds. We are becoming more impersonal in our child care. Education is becoming more and more mechanistic and test-driven and less interactive. We are losing the strands of human intimacy in all forms of interaction. I worry that if we continue on this road, future generations will not even be able to know what they are missing.”



The Growth of Microenterprise

The concept of microenterprise—lending small amounts of money to poor people to begin their own small businesses—has spread to 40 countries, according to **Muhammad Yunus**, micro-lending’s pioneer. The Grameen Bank, which he

founded in 1983, now loans \$2 billion to 2.2 million borrowers in 37,000 villages in Bangladesh. Yunus described three projects involving cellular phones: Grameen Phone, which provides the phones to women who then sell phone time in a country where telephones are scarce; Grameen Energy, which markets solar panels to, among other things, recharge the phones; and Grameen Communications, which brings the Internet to villages by adding cellular modems to the phones. Yunus also noted that Grameen Uddog, which connects the many rural hand loom weavers of Bangladesh to international textile and garment markets, has posted \$20 million in sales over the past three years.

Another on the panel was **Rosalind Copisarow**, who talked about Fundusz Micro, the Polish micro-lending company which in three years has become the leading micro-finance institution in the industrialized world. "There I was, reading the *Financial Times* as a die-hard investment banker doing a Bangladesh survey, and found this article about Grameen which changed my life. When I developed Fundusz Micro, I did have a lot of money. Although that was not essential, it was something which enabled money not to be the constraint on the methodology for setting up the company. Also, the sponsors of my program, the Polish-American Enterprise Fund, are venture capitalists who believe in giving their investees tremendous freedom. So I began with freedom and money, and complete ignorance. I had a banking background, but you probably all know what Bernard Shaw said about education—that education is what is left after you have forgotten everything that you've learned. So I had to get rid of

virtually everything I had learned from my banking background.

"I also did not speak Polish, which was a great asset for a very talkative person like me because it forced me to listen—harder than one does in one's own country in one's own language—to the other people. If you are the president of your company and the people you are working with are afraid to disagree or say their own opinion, there is nothing so salutary as being quiet. In addition, as an undergraduate I took a course on human sciences which includes psychology, anthropology, and sociology, amongst other subjects, and I believe a micro-banker cannot do much better than to have these educational experiences to help him along.

"These were my starting points and, finding myself on the first day in my job thinking what on earth should I do, I did what I only this week discovered may be called a complex adaptive system method, which was to say I had no idea what was going to work. I didn't have a clue. For those of you who are not in the micro-finance business, you may not be aware that there are as many different ways of offering micro-credit as there are institutions who grant it.

"So I thought, OK, let's start with everything, and we set up nine pilot programs, reduced from 200 possibilities, over the course of a year, and we tested all sorts of different things. We tested operating in big cities, in medium-sized towns, in villages. We used senior employees and junior people. We tried working with volunteers. We tried women-only programs and we tried mixed programs. We had different kinds

of credit products—individual loans, group loans. We even made goat loans which were my favorite, although I'm afraid it didn't work very well.

“The object of the exercise was to see from the grassroots, without preconceptions, what actually works in this country. I haven't heard of any other micro-finance institutions that started with such an elaborate pilot testing of different methodologies as that, and I don't think I would have done it if I hadn't felt so ignorant as to which methodologies to use. So sometimes, ignorance may not be all that bad.

“Having gotten some answers from the pilot, we then spread out all over the country and we now have branches in every major city of Poland.”

One of the answers Copisarow found was how to tell in advance who was honest and would repay the unsecured loans. The answer came from the group-lending process itself—which eventually made up 80 percent of the company's business: no group member would let a dishonest person into their group.

Another early question was how to establish the real income of borrowers. Because of high taxes, it was common practice to understate income. But this cut down the amount a client could borrow. The answer was to build such a strong level of trust between the loan officers and the client that clients were not afraid to say what they were really earning.

A third issue was how to find honest, competent, committed loan officers. The answer was not to look for people with

small business skills first and then see which of them is honest. “Everybody says they're honest,” Copisarow said. “What we did was hire a number of people who were the children and grandchildren of those resistance fighters who had offered their lives in the second World War, as no other country than Poland had done.”

Copisarow also stressed the importance of an open-book management style; having working principles which include the use of conscience and common sense in any situation where people do not know what to do, an idea which came from the employees themselves; and a bonus system closely tied to the goals and philosophy of the company. “My experience in banking,” she observed, “is that a lot of things go wrong when your money is not where your mouth is. So to tell people that teamwork is important, you need to reward them with appropriate incentives for exactly that teamwork, and not for individual performance.”



Women Redefining Leadership

The final event of the Forum was a luncheon with the theme once stated by Susan B. Anthony: “Men, their rights and nothing more; women, their rights and nothing less.” Awards honoring the emergence of women in leadership roles were received by fifteen women for their unique contributions.

Mahnaz Afkhami, Minister of State for Women's Affairs in Iran (1976-1978), currently executive director of Sisterhood is Global, and a member of the Advisory Committee on Women of Human Rights Watch. Forced out of Iran because of her work for women's rights, she has been in exile in the United States for more than a decade.

Dr. Marga Bührig, president of the Ecumenical Association of Academies and Lay Centers in Europe, and a member of the Presidium of the World Council of Churches where she served as moderator of the Preparatory Group for the World Convocation for Justice, Peace, and the Integrity of Creation. In Switzerland, her home, she works with Women for Peace and The Grey Panthers.

Dr. Apela Colorado of the Oneida Nation, who has dedicated her life to the remembrance, the renewal, and the grounding of traditional knowledge in postmodern society, particularly the sciences. She founded the world's only degree program in traditional knowledge and facilitates the ongoing research work of the Worldwide Indigenous Science Network.

Yael Dayan, a member of Israel's Labor Party, elected to the Knesset in 1992, and a passionate proponent of peace with the Palestinians. Her extra-parliamentary political activities include Peace Now, Women's Network for Peace, and the International Center for Peace in the Middle East.

Gun Denhart, founder and CEO of Hanna Andersson Corporation, a firm which makes children's clothing. Among

the firm's creative programs is "Hanna Downs," which gives a discount toward new purchases for returned out-grown clothing and donates the returns to shelters for battered mothers and homeless children.

Marian Wright Edelman, the first black woman admitted to the Mississippi bar. She directed the NAACP Legal Defense Fund in Jackson, Mississippi, and is the founder and president of the Children's Defense Fund. She organized the Stand for Children march on Washington, D.C., which drew more than 200,000 people, in response to the multitude of serious problems faced by children including gun-related deaths, poverty, and inadequate health care.

Henrietta Holsman Fore, chairman and CEO of her own investment company. Fore has held presidential appointments in the Agency for International Development and founded the U.S.-Asia Environmental Partnership, a coalition of business, government, and community organizations from the U.S. and 31 Asian nations.

Sonia Gandhi, who chairs the Rajiv Gandhi Foundation for the benefit of women and children which she founded after her husband's assassination. She has been steadfast and uncompromising through a turbulent and immensely challenging political time in India.

Khadija Haq, Executive Vice President of the Human Development Centre, a regional think tank based in Islamabad, Pakistan, which focuses on the poorest, most illiterate, most malnourished, and least gender sensitive region in the world.

Chief Bisi Ogunleye, Minister of Agriculture in Ondo State, Nigeria, and founder of Country Women's Association which helps women improve their economic conditions, teach literacy and family planning, and organize sewing and farming cooperatives.

Roseanne Thomas, actress and comedienne, recipient of the Eleanor Roosevelt Award for Democratic Principles in Art, of two Humanitas awards for the show that best communicated human values, and the Lucy Award from Women in Film.

Faye Wattleton, president of the Center for Gender Equality in New York, which promotes and leads national dialogue on the economic, political, educational, and health issues facing women throughout the world. As president of Planned Parenthood Federation of America from 1978-1992, she focused world attention on reproductive rights and family planning.

The Young Women:

Hafsat Abiola, whose father's election as president of Nigeria in the first democratic election in ten years was nullified by the ruling military council. After her father's incarceration and her mother's murder by the military, Abiola established the Kudirat Institute of Nigerian Democracy and travels and speaks extensively on democratization for her country.

Mavis Gruver, one of the founding editors of *New Moon: The Magazine for Girls and Their Dreams*. She attended the UN Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, China, in 1995 and

was a participant in 1996 in Children First, an international conference on children's rights.

Melissa Kwee, Magna Cum Laude graduate of Harvard University in social anthropology and recipient of a Fulbright scholarship to design and conduct research on what makes nonprofit organizations work in Nepal. Currently living in Singapore, she has founded Project Access, a leadership education program for women.



TIMELINE (ISSN 1061-2734) is published bimonthly by the Foundation for Global Community 222 High Street Palo Alto, CA 94301-1097

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A print edition of *Timeline* with photographs and artwork is available for a subscription price of \$10 per year (six issues).

Palo Alto, California
 January 15, 1998