SURVEY RESULTS ON EFFECTIVE LEVERAGE POINTS & AGORA PARTICIPANTS’ QUESTIONS

SURVEY RESULTS

38 participants from the AGORA took part in this survey.

With this survey we aimed to understand the current thinking among participants of the Agora about what can be the most effective ways civil society can/should work on systems change. At the Agora we will build on these results and continue the discussion.

The following is an anonymised summary of the results — still in a raw format.

PART ONE

a) Which leverage points are more effective; which are less effective?

Participants had to rank a list of 31 actions, each targeting a different leverage point in the system. These are all actions that can be undertaken by a group of activists or NGO. Some are more focused on the internal organisational level, but most are focused on the external strategic level. Some are more concrete, others a bit more vague. Actions were ranked from 1 to 5, where 5 is very important to focus on (high leverage point), and 1 is not worth doing (low leverage).

We added up the score awarded to each action. Here is the list, ordered by score from highest to lowest:

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<tr>
<td>Put efforts into creating powerful narratives that communicate our movement’s values and ideology.</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>20</td>
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<td>Share stories that propose concrete alternatives for the new system to make people believe in this new system that they will benefit from and that is worth believing in.</td>
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<td>16</td>
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<td>Develop and communicate a collective story of what’s wrong in the system and a common vision of what a better future could look like and embed all campaigns in this wider narrative of systemic change (Great Transition).</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Engage in experiments and alternative economic, social and cultural practices at the local level that prefigure the new system (e.g. transition groups, time banks, repair cafés, community gardening).</td>
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<td>Create spaces for debate about alternatives to the current economic system — a million conversations, with empathy and curiosity, not with the aim of finding all the answers.</td>
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<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Campaign for fundamental changes in the curriculums of the university discipline of economics to make it a much more pluralist discipline, instead of being mainly based on classical economic thinking.</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>Train spokespeople on new economic and Great Transition thinking and help them get appearances in the mainstream media.</td>
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<td>Create more pre-political spheres at the neighbourhood level (community organising) that reflect the actual diversity of citizens to reengage with democracy and develop political action.</td>
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<td>Involve a broader range of experts from different disciplines and</td>
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<td>political ideas to discuss the need and possibilities of a post-growth</td>
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<td>economy and how society can best organise in such a scenario, e.g. how</td>
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<td>would health protection, public pensions, education system, food</td>
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<td>systems and infrastructure have to change?</td>
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<td>Campaign for changes in the democratic system to improve citizen</td>
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<td>participation and create spaces for deliberation of the core questions</td>
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<td>of our times, e.g. for ‘future councils’, citizen-led institutional</td>
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<td>bodies that are consulted on core questions of our future.</td>
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<td>Campaign for international tax justice to make multinationals pay</td>
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<td>their fair share, as a first step to a fair international tax system.</td>
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<td>Help build capacity among ourselves, fellow activists and NGO staff</td>
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<td>to develop humility and consciousness to learn from new and different</td>
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<td>perspectives and understand the underlying belief systems of other</td>
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<td>people.</td>
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<td>Work with businesses to explore how they can contribute to and operate</td>
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<td>in a sustainable post-growth economy (including product-service</td>
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<td>structure and culture).</td>
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<td>Bring feminine values (e.g. collaboration, participation, nurturing)</td>
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<td>into politics and the economy, beginning, for example, with putting</td>
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<td>women in power at the municipal level.</td>
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<td>Organise movements to take over power at the municipal level and join the global municipal movement, given that governments at the national level are full of old, corrupt politics.</td>
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<td>Engage in commons-based peer production processes as the alternative to the market and the state.</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>Become aware of our own gender and racial privilege in our organisations and fight our own institutional racism and sexism to practice what we preach and change the culture we live in.</td>
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<td>Promote and enable ways of living with reduced working hours.</td>
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<td>Support intersectional movements from marginalised communities to help them fight against multiple oppressions (racism, sexism, etc.).</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td>Participate in international governmental processes and try to influence the UN, the EU and other international institutions to help them transform into or set up effective international governance systems that take care of the global commons and enable a sane globalisation.</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td>Create a movement of planetary citizens to help mankind evolve culturally towards a planetary citizen identity and enable better global collaboration.</td>
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<td>8</td>
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<td>Campaign for the introduction of a universal basic income.</td>
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<td>Work towards and lobby for a transition to a circular economy.</td>
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<td>Campaign against gender inequality, for example, by using official gender pay gap indicators as proof of discrimination.</td>
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<td>Build power and resistance by organising and expanding new, radical, left-wing movements that fully embrace an anti-capitalist and intersectional agenda.</td>
<td>103</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<td>Support (or engage in) experiments with blockchain technology to create an economy that fulfils human needs within ecological limits.</td>
<td>93</td>
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<tr>
<td>Help to further undermine the credibility of the mainstream media to make them disappear. Alternative media and citizen journalists are the future. The mainstream media only represent the voices of power.</td>
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<td>Eliminate hierarchies in our own organisations and movements. Campaign for a world without hierarchies. Hierarchies are generally oppressive.</td>
<td>76</td>
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b) Please add a brief description of any additional action/leverage point that you think is important and is missing in the list.

Campaign for democratizing property rights such that all important stakeholders share property rights and obligations. Develop economic indicators that focus on the ends of economic activity rather than the means (i.e. measuring whether humans and other life forms can live well, rather than measuring monetary flows). Promote a basic income that is based on reciprocity: anyone who makes a serious commitment to work for the common good can earn a basic income. Campaign for reforms in the financial system, transforming it into a public infrastructure.

Expose and start a debate about ‘spin doctoring’, advertising agencies pushing corporate and political narratives (e.g. Saatchi & Saatchi promoting their so-called ‘brand activism’). They reach farther than targeted lobbyism, because their strategy targets society and leverages, for example, millennials search for ‘meaning’. Ad agencies are using mimicry / imitating activism, and through this strategy they could undermine any of our future narratives.
Finding ways to eliminate the power of religions.

Conduct direct actions (e.g. political art, opposition of harmful projects and demonstrations) that strengthen movements (e.g. create self-efficacy, visible solidarity and symbolic events).

Promote the widespread practice of self-development, meditation, therapy, psychedelics, etc. among people of all classes to tackle the culture of consumerism and contribute to a value shift in society. Target influencers, politicians and others with the above to create different politics.

Work with the younger generation, new educational models and methods (de-schooling society for a school of life).

Health: question our health system and our relationship with death.

Integrate the shadow of the progressive systems change movement, recognise our blind spots, understand how our emphasis on identity politics alienates others and contributes to the rise of the alt-right.

Develop systems literacy: the capacity for people to identify and understand systemic behaviour and take long-term effects into consideration when making decisions, both at the micro and the macro level.

Create a framework or strategy that leverages ‘defining moments’ (e.g. large-scale natural disasters) to induce radical and positive social and political system changes. Mandate that companies/businesses and schools / academic institutions ensure that their employees and students spend a portion of their work day building meaningful relationships with nature and each other. Create a strategy that targets key individual influences in political, corporate and social systems that can be leveraged (i.e. empowered or changed) to create systemic change.

Internal transition: a fundamental change in our value system, our way of life, our view of others. In order to transform ourselves to change the world.

Identify critical infrastructural innovations with transformative potential (e.g. Internet of Things) and help rally social and activist energies towards securing democratized control of and access to such infrastructures. People’s views, values, and desires depend on what they experience in their particular life worlds and contexts of practice. Hence critical reflection on generalized (behaviourist) assumptions about how social change happens it required; instead, advance the production of institutional structures fostering alternative social contexts of practice.

Work with existing mainstream politics and media to create pathways for alternative thinking and practice to enter our everyday realities and infrastructures.

Increase number of CSOs that participate in this debate from across the world, and focus on what unites rather than what divides.

Advocate curricula and education policies (from primary to higher education and in-service training) to enhance systemic change.
Spread what Naomi Klein is doing with the Leap Manifesto: broad national civil society coalitions that make bold and concrete proposals that some politicians already use as election manifesto.

Bring more attention to the un-democratic nature of a political system and culture that only 2% of people are actively participating in. Re-awaken narratives about human creativity and ingenuity. More emphasis on the future as offering possible answers to our current problems with resources and capacities.

Engage with stakeholders from Asia and Africa. Reduce dramatically the financialisation of the economy. Engage in experiments with complementary currencies. Adopt process-oriented perspectives with a focus on conditions for processes to grow. Adopt a finer analysis of social categories, e.g. “capital” and “businesses” are too simplistic as concepts, covering wildly different realities, which we need to leverage for transformation.

Catalyse a Global New Economy Movement, which builds a vanguard power base for change across civil society, cities and local regions, businesses, countries, faith groups and research and policy groups.

Experiment with local authorities and actors on new “public policies” & multi-actor partnerships based on the Transition’s values and principles.

Educate the youth to think for themselves (be critical) and work together.

PART TWO: The following list of questions invites you to reflect on the role of CSOs in Pathways to the Great Transition in relation to specific leverage points.

1. As part of the Great Transition, we have to innovate our democracies to increase participation from all social groups as well as meaningful deliberation about the key questions of our times.

1a. Do you believe that the above is an important issue for civil society organisations / activism to get involved in?

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1b. What kind of specific strategies from civil society organisations/activism would be required to create effective leverage in this area?

Mass mobilisation, international coordination, direct action. Provide physical spaces for this kind of deliberation.

Democratic processes often are poorly designed. The majority “wins” while the minority loses; contests are designed in such a way that they divide people rather than finding common ground. Alternative methods of decision-making, such as systemic consensusing and sociocracy, need to be promoted because they can prevent such results and enable solutions that really help everybody.
I would put into question the state as a valid leverage point. With rising debts, public-private partnerships, banks as creditors of states, etc., there is little leeway left. If the state is unable to perform its fundamental function (social protection system, education, equal health care etc.) then these functions need to be re-discussed. People/Society legitimizes the authority of the state through their acceptance of the social contract. The social contract has to be redefined!

Promote global citizenship campaigning against the defence industry and for diminishing the power of religions.

Facilitate public debates on not-yet democratic matters (like the new board members of the ECB). Create inclusive spaces for democratic debates on a local level. Create parallel citizen-led institutional bodies (like the European Constituent Assembly).

Participatory democracy.

Create open fora for communication/exchange between different groups online and offline outside of bot-infested, traditional social networks. Support citizen and alternative media. Build intersectional social movements, and involve more people in lived alternatives.

Increase awareness that other ways of living are possible and desirable. Ensure that their views can transform some things.

Security, in particular economic security, is a basis for participation (basic income, free health care, insurance, education and culture, funeral fees, free access to basic needs to be democratically defined). More time, less stress (reduce working hours, question screen society, society of spectacles and consumerism). Popular education for re-empowerment, emancipation. Focus on what makes sense for the people: find a bridge between “our” holistic complex question and “their” concrete concerns. Public deliberation on practical and meaningful issues: basic needs, food, health, etc. Be creative: experiment jury of your peers, random draw of citizens, etc. Local alternative economic system: non-speculative currency, time bank, and reciprocity economics.

Work with existing, non-Transition-oriented interest groups, e.g. Women’s Institute, RSPB, National Trust

Today, it’s the problem of not having the free time and the space to engage with initiatives related to our own concerns at the local and global level at the same time. And “at the same time” matters because we must perceive, as CSOs, the relationship between our actions and decisions and the new, counter-hegemonic narratives.

Intersect issues better and network beyond our constituency.

Build relationships across social divides.

Show the way by formulating the key questions and organizing forums for deliberation.

Campaign for legislation that has businesses and policy makers demonstrate how their product/service/decision serves the public’s wellbeing (including a consultation with their target and collateral audiences to determine the impact of their product/service/decision).
More alliances with both politicians, corporate bodies, academics, unions, etc. It is crucial that the movement does not become a niche.

A political change in mind set/paradigm by using the commons, for example: it’s not only about deliberation but also self-organized cooperation. And the communities should be acknowledged by the state. Use open digital tools: discourse and practices should be aligned when it comes to the software we use in our activist world. Progressively apply self-binding rules to improve social and cultural diversities in our sector.

Fostering diversity in democratic deliberation is essential as well as a balanced representation of marginalized and minority discourses. A “discursive democracy” would lead to a true “ecology of knowledge” with transformative potential, insofar the status quo rests on a heavily biased representation of the world. The storyline of “enhancing participation”, based on liberal premises of individual representation (which take preferences and interests as pre-constituted or given), is more likely to reproduce the status quo than advance a Great Transition. Sticking to outdated conceptions of liberal representation risks leading to a “tyranny of majorities” which stabilizes social imaginaries that equate freedom and emancipation with unfettered material consumption and growth opportunities. We need new accounts of democracy that base on “diversity-counting” instead of mere “head-counting”. And CSOs, as institutional structures, are in a privileged position to amplify unheard voices and help them engage in balanced struggle with dominant discourses. The strategies described in the practical guide Re.imagining Activism provide a good framework and starting point.

Become more inclusive in all they/we are doing

Civil society organisations should be open and democratic communities of people sharing the same visions and values. We should pay attention to inclusiveness and how to make it easy for new people to get engaged. There should be room for debates, learning and trying new things. There should always be a clear vision of social change and concrete, transformative outcome challenges that help us to channel resources effectively. Too often this is missing. We are here not to “help” but to make social change happen. Too often we stay in our own bubble. Exploring new and “uncomfortable” partnerships for transformation can make a real difference. Sometimes it’s more effective to ask someone to join us than to tell them what they should do.

Larger NGOs should give already established social movements looking at similar issues a platform, be that sharing their asks/strategies/tactics with their supporters while endorsing where the asks came from or partnering with them with a view to raising their profile in the media for wider reach of their position(s).

Focus on fighting gender imbalances to favour women increasing participation in decision-making spaces.

I think you need to use a coalition of famous and therefore influential figures in a country who work together with visionary people in civil society to pull this off with success.

Citizens Assemblies, Flatpack Democracy, localism, municipalism. The Alternative UK is offering political laboratories aimed at regular community members for participation in the re-imagining of politics for the 21C, i.e. re-orienting outside the political bubble.
Focus on education and culture. Promote arrangements to facilitate lifelong learning and the reduction of work time.

Work much more closely together and share a common framing and overarching narrative in all communications, however diverse the subject.

Identify and learn from the thousands of good and innovative practices that already exist around the world.

Understand why people are disengaging from these questions. This might be that they feel unrepresented by existing politics, they don’t have the time, or that the status quo suits them. Address these shortcomings to be able to truly engage people. This will take time, and not yield quick results, but long-term it seems like a meaningful way of widening the scope of the debate and those participating.

Story-telling: critical lecture of the world we live in (with a global perspective)

From protest to change, through social movements and CSOs working together. And from idea to living change, meaning that we should not only talk about it but actually showcase it.

More investment in offline, face-to-face communication and outreach.

2. As part of the Great Transition, new global governance systems have to be created/evolve in order to provide effective mechanisms for justice and sustainability at the global level and take care of the global commons.

2a. Do you believe that the above is an important issue for civil society organisations /activism to get involved in?

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2b. What kind of specific strategies from civil society organisations/activism would be required to create effective leverage in this area?

Seeing the shift in global organisations for some years already, their influence and role is very much questionable with the rise of the state sovereignty discourse. Even more since the election of President Trump and the rising lack of funding for UN institutions. Rules-based global order is shifting to deal-based global order (FTAs). I believe the future lies more in leveraging regional and local institutions, taking responsibility for Africa (African Union) or, for example, for the Pacific (ASEAN) also the strong C40 (Cities Climate Leadership Group) or Mayors for Climate.

Get more involved in the curriculum of related academic disciplines such as economics, finance, management etc.
Create strong ties between emerging global networks and the local level, to embed them in real communities and prevent the degradation of such systems over time.

Collaborative leadership

Build broad-based intersectional movements and local/regional political power. A networked global governance system / new institutions should emerge from that, not the other way around. Create binding global rules and a legal ground for holding multinational corporations accountable irrespective of location (e.g. ecocide as a crime against peace).

Ensure that most people share this view and have a real and broad understanding of “sustainability” and not just “green washing”.

Maybe, as Barber said, “if mayors ruled the world”, with a global parliament of mayors, we could take on part of those goals at local level. And as CSOs and activists, we can be part of the agenda-setting process. But we also need to construct a kind of a real global governance. In one way or another the tragedy of the commons needs it. But as for which strategy. I don’t know how or where we have to start.

Lobby and campaign for stronger regulations of companies via tax justice, humans treaty, due diligence and states experimenting with concepts like basic income, work time reduction etc.

I think these probably have to emerge from more local governance reform.

Not sure, this is not my field... Work both bottom up (networks of CSOs across boundaries geographical as well as cultural) and top down (intervening directly at the level of global institutions and states). This is probably already the case. Maybe q4 is an answer...

Campaign for legislation that has businesses and policy makers demonstrate how their product/service/decision promotes sustainability and nature conservation.

Transnational alliances that break with party politics and national borders (of interest and control). On the other hand, it is important to bear in mind that some regions of the world are for now in a moment where the urgency is to stop wars and genocides.

The issue (new global governance systems) is important as such, but I can’t really see clear strategies for CSOs to really have a direct impact on it. As most of the “Transition” initiatives tend to focus on the local dimension, the challenge might consist of connecting them translocally. But it seems difficult to replace the states as a key player in global governance, and we know how the states have been captured by conservative trends and corporate interests. Maybe a new internationalist/cosmopolitan alternative theory can arise from the municipalist movement (progressive mayor counter-powering the national state sovereignty) but it’s too early to really believe in this scenario.

Transformation is not only (maybe not even firstly) a matter of innovation or construction of a new order, but of deconstruction of the old order. Hence, and closely connected with the previous question, CSOs need to make space for DIFFERENCE to emerge. This implies supporting and empowering alternatives to actually challenge dominant beliefs and practices—not simply indulging in compensatory fantasies and providing escape routes to niches of practice that are tolerated by the system because they pose no threat at all. The
state and the market are ill-suited for this, as they essentially reflect (and reproduce, or more precisely, magnify) prevailing social power structures—both material and ideational ones. The role of civil society, thus, needs to evolve from its traditional roles—rule-challenging (protest, resistance) or rule-taking (service provision) to a rule-making role. That is, taking up a governance role. Not by replacing political decision-making at the national or international level, but rather by radically altering the cultural magma from which political ideas and initiatives emerge, supporting the seeds of potentially subversive power structures; inspiring, encouraging, and collaborating in the elaboration of “non-reformist reform”—proposals (A. Gorz), etc. The book The Politics of Sufficiency by A. Zahrnt and U. Schneidewind provides excellent hints as to where to start.

I think the global scale is too large; we should focus on national/regional governance that is currently responsible for legislation.

Legislative enforcement

Change the language, join up campaigning/approaches across sectoral silos.

It’s necessary to create new global governance systems in an inclusive and democratic way, otherwise those won’t make a big difference with the old ones. People should be engaged in order to challenge the power of business and political elites. Civil society should be able to present the voices of those who are not heard and engage marginalized people.

I’m not sure about creating entirely new global governance systems. Is this feasible? Will this take so much time that real change will not happen fast enough? Is changing the existing structures a more realistic way to go? Perhaps this has long been discussed and excluded. I’d fear that it would take so long to imagine, design, socialise and build these new systems that the people needed to see this through would stop feeling motivated.

More policy/lobby work on “big issue” policy proposals, like the future of Europe or the Global Pact for the Environment.

Partly it’s narratives: we always emphasise the relationship between health of the individual, society and planet. Those taking part in local initiatives can be linked into global networks of others doing the same. Rather than global decisions being taken by representatives working centrally, they can be forged in deliberative processes, some of which were present in COP 21. Simpol are good at this.

Engage with stakeholders from the non-Western world. Global governance has already shifted to multi-polarity and disengagement (e.g. US and UK) and the energy to build a new one will mainly come from the losers of the previous order.

Vital as new global governance mechanisms are, they will only be possible once system change has been achieved within a sufficient number of countries. Thus civil society must first focus on systemic change from the grassroots to the national.

Many parts of our societies reject the idea of global governance. The leverage point these days might be more about new horizontal practices and culture for complex collaborations among different kinds of actors and at different territory levels.
Highlighting the failings of the existing structures, e.g. multinationals exploiting the advantages of having no physical ‘home’ and raising the agenda with citizens and decision makers. The key would be communicating effectively to each audience.

Renew their own systems and hire young people.

Active agenda-setting at the global level, by developing minimum demands and challenging existing structures by offering clear solutions to fix them.

Create governance systems based on the peoples and communities, not state driven.

3. As part of the Great Transition, policies, examples, norms, ways of living, and new institutions have to emerge that help create a post-growth economy as a viable, sustainable and just pathway (politics of sufficiency).

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3a. Do you believe that the above is an important issue for civil society organisations/activism to get involved in?

3b. What kind of specific strategies from civil society organisations/activism would be required to create effective leverage in this area?

Networking and additional capacity to support what is already out there.

Working out realistic proposals for how things could be done differently. Finding and supporting ways of implementing such proposals at a small scale. Evaluating these experiments in order to enable them to work better. Publicizing the results, supporting other people who are trying to start similar projects, creating templates for them. Building networks such that many small ventures can start building a system of interactions that becomes less dependent on the old economic structures. On the basis of growing economic and popular strength, pushing for political and legal changes that support life-oriented rather than profit-maximizing economic structures.

I think there we have to be careful not to fall into the ‘renouncement narrative’ pitfall.

Funding researchers in social sciences such as sociology, social anthropology, social psychology etc.

Figuring out which policies have the potential to create a broad resonance in the population at the time. Creating public debate and small-scale experiments around those policies.

Collaborative economy.

New municipalism. Commons-based projects. Values change through self-development, etc. Educational reform (but not just in the field of economics). Gross national happiness and other indicators to change the narrative from the top
Make the invisible visible: a lot is already here.

Demonstration projects and life stories.

Identify good practices and work with more progressive countries.

Showcase these examples and specifically their systemic benefits, and how things create results ‘in connection’ to each other. Create and monitor some systemic indicators to follow progress, and use at the level of Q1 and Q2.

I don’t know. But again, whenever examples are presented, it is important to situate them within the context of their emergence. Some examples would be inaccurate in other parts of the world.

Not so much the policies (though it’s important to continue this advocacy work towards the traditional political world), but indeed examples, ways of living and new institutions are in the reach of movements, CSOs. One way or another, we need good success stories to prove that systemic alternatives are possible, especially at the institutional level. And they require an important dimension of resilience so that they don’t have to rely on top-down hazardous decisions. In France, the fight against a new airport near Nantes at Notre Dame des Landes would be a good local-based example and institutional experiment for a post-growth economy.

Fostering the production and ample dissemination of a consistent framework exposing the systemic (macro-, meso-, and micro- level) constraints to transformative initiatives (e.g. the economic growth dilemma btw. short-term stability and long-term unsustainability, the structural incapacity of politics and democracy as currently conceived to keep up with—let alone control—the speed of social change, the ambiguous if not outright contradictory pressures imposed upon individuals as change agents, etc.). An integral picture of the socio-ecological predicament of contemporary societies is a sine-qua-non input to the debate, providing orientation to critics and innovators. Such a picture will necessarily always be provisional and contestable, but will provide the necessary frame of reference for parties in the debate engaging each other, instead of talking past each other. The resistance of CSOs to engage with “grand narratives” and diagnoses is undermining their very mission as agents towards a Great Transition.

Spreading the examples that grassroots actors are practicing, and advocating for them in politics and the media.

Invite new/young thinkers that can relate to ‘hipster’ rather than the new ‘old’ hippies (or perceived as such)

We should push better politics and question the norms and ways of living by raising awareness in different ways. Advocating education policies, school curricula and competences of teachers/educators is an important leverage point, and this is where civil society actors should cooperate for better results.

I think advocating for improvement of existing institutions may be a more realistic approach.

Through storytelling, show that it is already possible to lead our lives sustainably; push people to radically change their lifestyle this way.
Not sure about the language. Humans always aim for more—if you take anything away, you have to give much more in its place, and the net gain is what we should emphasise. For example, we are humans with given emotional needs—for status, belonging, meaning and purpose, connection, achievement, control/autonomy, intimacy. At the moment, these are being superficially met by consumer products but in ways that leave us addicted and causes long-term dissatisfaction. How can we get these needs met in more compelling ways? When we offer citizens a life of more meaning and purpose, we hardly need mention the loss of material accumulation. I would hesitate to call this a mental health issue—more of a social health issue.

Promote co-creation at local levels, including the use of complementary currencies, and claim for regulations protecting those experiments.

Civil society needs to actively support and amplify the work of radical pioneers in all fields.

Sharing stories of people and actors/sectors who have experimented with alternatives for decades, like cooperatives, solidarity economy, social businesses and more recently commons showing how real women and men have achieved positive changes in their own lives, on their local ground and in their “markets”... The objective being to show that there is already a critical mass of actors and new entrepreneurs who have achieved and transformed traditional businesses!

Begin the debate: is growth always good?

Work on cultural, moral and legal aspects of the rules at the same time.

We need to build alliances with new movements trying to build new coping strategies on sustainability etc.

Supporting communities to develop solutions for resilience, sovereignty and prosperity.

Start by trying new ways of working and collaborating in our own organisations.

4. As part of the Great Transition, policies/examples and new institutions have to emerge to create a new (post-neo-liberal) balance between the commons, the market and the state.

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4a. Do you believe that the above is an important issue for civil society organisations/activism to get involved in?

4b. What kind of specific strategies from civil society organisations/activism would be required to create effective leverage in this area?

Strategic coordination
I consider it of key importance to re-conceptualize property rights as property relationships (including rights as well as obligations, and complex relationships among numerous stakeholders, including living things other than humans). This does NOT mean abolishing property rights, but in fact making them consistent with what economic liberals claim they accomplish (e.g. provide rewards and incentives for responsible, productive work). As soon as one starts thinking of property relationships in these terms, old notions of private property as a kind of monarchy lose their legitimacy, and more space is created for the new economic visions based on democratic and participatory involvement by all stakeholders.

I don’t believe that the transition will be pushed through policies or institutions. In Switzerland, we had so many votes on important policies, but obviously people were not persuaded. That’s why I believe the transformation has to come from within every single person.

Get more involved in the curriculum of related academic disciplines such as economics, finance, management etc.

Citing a leverage point from Part 1: “Engage in experiments and alternative economic, social and cultural practices at the local level that prefigure the new system.”

Non-binary politics

Storytelling & narratives about successful examples. ‘New normal’ of lived alternatives. Intersectionality and building much more inclusive movements and alternatives than currently, especially in Europe.

Dialogue, humility, openness, getting out of our dogma, ideologies, listen and deeply understand the problems and the people...not judging them.

Challenge enterprises to show commitment to all stakeholders through their management and legal form. Publicise different ways of organising economically (e.g. fair shares, economy for the common good, B Corp).

Not sure... I understand global commons as also encompassing justice, health, literacy, peaceful social climate, wellbeing etc. I think the issue of externalities can be related to the commons in its various manifestations. Internalization (depletion of resources, enclosure of public goods, siphoning of value-added to shareholders, the benefits of a literate and healthy workforce, peace etc.) and externalization (burnt out and demotivated employees, rejection of toxins, CO₂, pollutants that affect health of people and of the system etc.). Such new institutions could take care of the systemic health / sustainability of the commons as a counter power to states and markets, and be in charge for example of these systemic indicators I mentioned above. It is essential as a strategy to link systemic health / sustainability / the commons and to work towards systemic literacy to understand these connections and implications.

Maybe this is a question that should not be only tackled by civil society, but by public institutions themselves as well.
Divest from old patriarchal top-down political parties. Invest in new independent citizens platform, including the municipalist ones with an explicit political/electoral agenda. Pleading for a partner-state supporting not-for-profit civic organizing (at least not blocking them). Dismantling the private companies that plunder the natural and digital commons (starting with having them pay taxes).

Work closely with researchers and practitioners to give their knowledge/experience a public voice.

Work with new thinkers, political parties, new movements.

We should advocate new institutions/mechanisms and policies. Some of the work that is now done by civil society organisations (e.g. watchdog role for corporate responsibility) could be institutionalised.

Building local community projects that build new relationships rather than simply deconstruct the old. The narrative should be more focused on human and social—as natural—in real time, less on abstract ideas. The real shift is in the idea of people taking back control of their creative autonomy, rather than in the state handing them back increments of power.

Work with progressive entrepreneurship. Change economics curricula. Claim for regulations enforcing the recognition of all externalities and protecting new types of economic organizations besides the currently dominant (for-financial-profit multinational).

Civil society needs to form a vanguard movement by actively working with progressives in business, cities, countries, academia, faith groups, international organisations and citizens alliances.

Experiment with new institutional setting and practices involving several kinds of actors and identify more precisely what has been already done recently or very long time ago...

Take part in the debate about how society could be structured. Coordinate conversations, bringing research from other models and continuing the momentum.

Start at the local level, experiment and replicate.

How to tap into national and regional community based org. All CSOs should reconsider their strategies in doing so.

I am not sure that creating a balance between those is possible.

5. Please elaborate on any leverage point and strategy that was not included in 1–4 and that you deem very important (could also be linked to any leverage point mentioned in part one of this survey).

Thinking about Occupy or Nuit Debout, the lack of a common vision, if I remember correctly, was one of the biggest problems. If we were able to cultivate an ‘advertising-like’ picture of the future and on top of that put ‘best practice” examples of people living the change (not
primarily through renouncement) needed with natural abundance, I believe that would be a strong leverage point internationally.

Private sector is one key player in the Great Transition, so more strategies should be developed to involve them.

Promote integral thinking and a less polarised political discourse.

Highlight monism in most economic teaching and build support for pluralist economic courses.

It is very crucial to focus and as such make choices, I believe, and join up, unite, because the only way to get there is ‘together’.

The relationship between civil society and regular community members is barely there. More participation in democratic institutions or active social development has to be seen as the trigger for Transition. However, the failure of politics and civil society until now to activate that has to be grappled with. People are not apathetic, but otherwise engaged. Something more compelling all around has to be on offer.

Dramatically reduce financialization. The rentier imperative is preventing the emergence of a paradigm based on ecology and democracy, and at the same time increasing the chances of collapse.

In WEAll we are arguing for a holistic response incorporating all the following elements: Connect and convene 7 meta movements from around the world (both radical ones and those closer to the current system). These meta movements will be: businesses; faith and values groups; academia and think thanks; civil society organisations; governments; practitioners such as cities which are implementing new economy initiatives at scale; and institutional innovators. WEAll will support their strategy, collaborations, dissemination and replication. Create a global citizens movement alongside support for WEAll communities of place in the form of hubs driven by local actors in their communities, cities and countries. Deliver a gathering of the components of the wider movement in Malaga in 2019. This will encompass a launch of the Global New Economy Movement. Work with marketing experts, storytellers, and communities to distil elements of an appropriate framing for a new narrative. Creatively and proactively disseminate the new narrative to key audiences in order to bring the co-creation of a new economy into the mainstream. Create and share playbooks (guides) that explain how relevant actors can advance the creation of a wellbeing economy. Synthesise various academic and grey literature that informs new economy analysis and propositions. Convene universities, students’ movements, think tanks, CSOs and research institutes of the new economy to distil key dimensions of a new economy theory. Spread, share, communicate and champion this material. Convene the governments of countries and regions where policy decisions are being made for wellbeing, in all its dimensions.

Culture and arts as major leverage points for change in society by connecting with the many existing underground artistic movements flourishing all around the world as concrete expression of resistances, new values and new experiments!
Narrative and vision on the MODERN beyond capitalism that is people/community centered, inclusive and sustainable. Reclaim that space from the far right with a GLOBAL vision and story. (See leverage point from Part 1: “Put efforts into creating powerful narratives that communicate our movement’s values and ideology.”) Strategy to inspire and win over the elite with this vision.

AGORA PARTICIPANTS’ QUESTIONS

What is the question about the Great Transition / systemic change that you’re most interested in at the moment?

How to join up the dots in the global network of Transition initiatives?

I’m interested in reframing the role of science and tech, especially digital tech.

I’m interested in change in the economic system, the role of defense industry in existing “democracies”, communicating the Great Transition.

What are leverage points organisations are already working on or what should we work on?

Micro- and macro-level structural constraints and enablers for transformative agents

How to build on new foundations for democracy? How to radically improve economic and social justice?

What is the character of “the movement” for a Great Transition? Fundamentally cultural with political and economic organisational forms, or something else?

How can the inner transition catalyse the Great Transition?

What do we need to change in order to catalyse a movement for systemic change?

What are potential elements (building blocks) of strategies for engaging wider public opinion in the journey of the Great Transition?

How to get policy makers on board?

To what extent should we consider the centrality of generate changes in social norms, at global and local levels, to impulse new narratives of social changes that are needed to accomplish a Great Transition?
What are the preconditions of societal change from behavioral sciences point of view (sociology, psychology, economics, sociobiology, ethnology, cultural studies etc.)?

How to catalyse processes of collective storytelling that can bridge the polarisation divide in our politics?

The diffusion of change: how to reach ordinary people with stories they understand and can live by?

How to build and work towards a vision for the next system from our current place?

How to get a grasp of transition landscapes (positioning of actors)? How to cross boundaries and coalesce action without needing to agree on principles? How to visualize flows and aggregates (information, matter, energy) as they evolve?

How can we challenge extreme power relations?

What is the role of culture in facilitating a systemic change?

I am currently interested in finding ways to explain how you cannot get the policy right if the ontology is wrong, and I am passionate about our new framework on commons and communing.

I’m currently most interested in organisational capacities to foster social transformation.

Game theoretic approaches to a) compelling change and b) long-term stability.

How can we build up systemic alternatives sufficiently so that in times of crisis, they can be replicated or scaled up rapidly enough to take the place of old institutions?

What role funders have in the move towards the Great Transition, and how they can enable + embody systemic change values in their structures and grant-giving practices.

How to connect different sectors and social bubbles in order for us to shape the Great Transition instead of just being subject to it?

The localisation of the economy to counter the marketisation of society.

How to overcome inertia and create a broad movement for giving up privileges now before it is too late?

The opportunities and challenges of the progressive municipalist movements to achieve concrete systemic change at their territorial level in shifting from alternative practices to alternative public policies.

How can we develop a more spiritual-intuitional way of relating to the world (nature and other beings) in order to overcome our rational-material-imperialistic mold?

What are the key success factors for social change processes?
What we deal with a lot these days is the very powerful and violent emergency and by-all-means-necessary framing around the socio-ecological crises we’re facing, and climate change in particular. How do we counter large-scale techno-fix approaches that override democratic processes and basic rights, and how do we build the movement of movements that puts forward and has the power to push through a radically alternative, transformative vision? Also, slightly different, but related: the ever-increasing concentration of power, wealth, income and control, e.g. with the help of large and emerging technologies, and the difficulty of resisting such developments that go largely unnoticed by the broader public; and the cultural aspect of ideological penetration of four decades of neoliberalism (individualisation, alleged lack of alternatives) that has made collective political articulation much more difficult, even unimaginable in parts of society.

I’m interested in creating trustworthy forms for enterprises.

How to be radical (take the problem from the root) and implement in-depth, constructive, open dialogue?

How can we use the best knowledge and wisdom in science, history, evolutionary thinkers, for us to assume our role as evolutionary designers of a just, sustainable, flourishing future?

Convergence of systemic change movements: how can we put the systemic challenges at the centre of our mobilisation instead of competing for attention and importance? How to conceptually advance the ideas (and strategic practice) of linking gender, climate change, commons, white supremacy etc? It is not “the more we talk about feminism, the less time we have to talk about a post-growth economy”; aren’t they systemically linked?

How to identify, and capitalize on, the most effective leverage points for meaningful system changes?

Can we open up to different ideas beyond our moral intuitions and develop a more powerful political project of the Great Transition?

How to communicate the necessity and beauty of a Great Transition?

How to use storytelling and visual techniques to represent systemic change?

How to mainstream systemic thinking?

I’m interested in identifying leverage points, analysing the impact of pulling leverage points and tools to improve our capacity to share all this expertise with others (outside of the seminar).

What are the new roles of organised civil society? How to embrace change and transform ourselves, especially by taking a critical lens on the current role of activism in working towards systems change?

I am passionate about climate change. My question is, in a time when scientists, activists, policy experts and many of the public in our countries understand the urgency of climate change, what can we do to push the inaction of our governments? Because ultimately change needs to happen at a governmental level to address this problem. To get politicians past seeing no votes in bringing in policies rooted in climate justice. But also to bring the
wider public with us to bring the pressure needed to bear on our leaders. We have been
tackling this question for decades and despite the huge progress that has been made in
terms of activism and campaigns, still not enough voters are seeing the urgency and raising
their voices. I fear it will take us too long to bring the public with us and get the politicians
on side. Those of us in civil society understand the urgency, the science is clear. The current
setup of systems, both social and political is not working to address this problem, which will
have implications on us and our children and is already having such devastating
consequences for communities in developing countries. If the current system can’t see the
urgency, is there a way around it, or a unique system that we can forge, so we can tackle the
climate crisis in time?

How to push towards a change of laws/politics that will ensure we actually take steps that
are binding for individuals as well as corporations?

How the hell are we going to bring bigger groups on board for the concept of systemic
change in the next three years? Given the huge climate urgency and the limited timeframe
to stay within the 1.5 degrees Celsius warming.

How can we strategically focus our efforts together for higher impact and for leveraging
change?

Continuing a scattered, almost random focus will not be able to match the rate of social,
economic and ecological deterioration facing us.

I’m inserted in the theory of change for transformations, in particular the application of
systems approaches and complexity sciences.

Specifically for the Agora, I’m interested in the importance of self-reflection and the
questioning of world-views and mindsets of change makers.

How we can create a strong enough power base to catalyse urgently needed systemic
change?

Revolutionary change without revolution.

About the fight around questions of distribution. How do we organize and guarantee
distribution without growth? At the moment we—more or less—have no real distribution.
The participation of the classes without property comes from the monetary surplus product,
but without real redistribution. Distribution injustice is rising (big topic in Germany at the
moment!). Growth will be the answer for a lot of people! If we do not want to keep
organizing distribution at the expense of a tightening of the ecological Question—and that’s
why we want de-growth—we have to talk about class struggles, about real distribution again.
Is there anything growing but profits of companies? How can we show that the post-war
model of our economy, the so-called social market economy (a political battle concept), was
nothing but a historical exception built on massive reconstruction needs supported by a
global system of exploitation? What is the role of the political left in this context?