

# Design Lab

For a Well-being Economies  
Alliance Canada hub (WE All CAN)

OCTOBER - NOVEMBER 2020

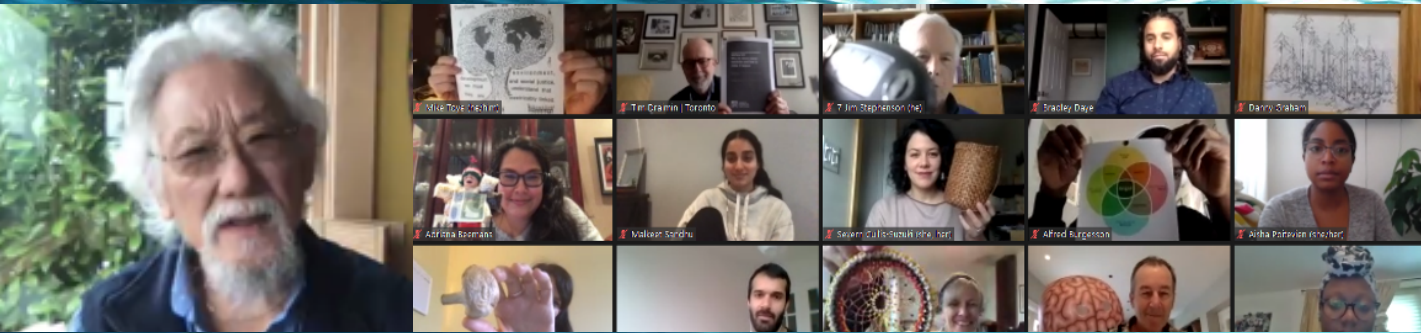


**WELLBEING  
ECONOMY  
ALLIANCE**



**DAVID SUZUKI  
FOUNDATION**  
One nature.

**FONDATION  
DAVID SUZUKI**  
Un monde. Une nature.



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## Acknowledgments

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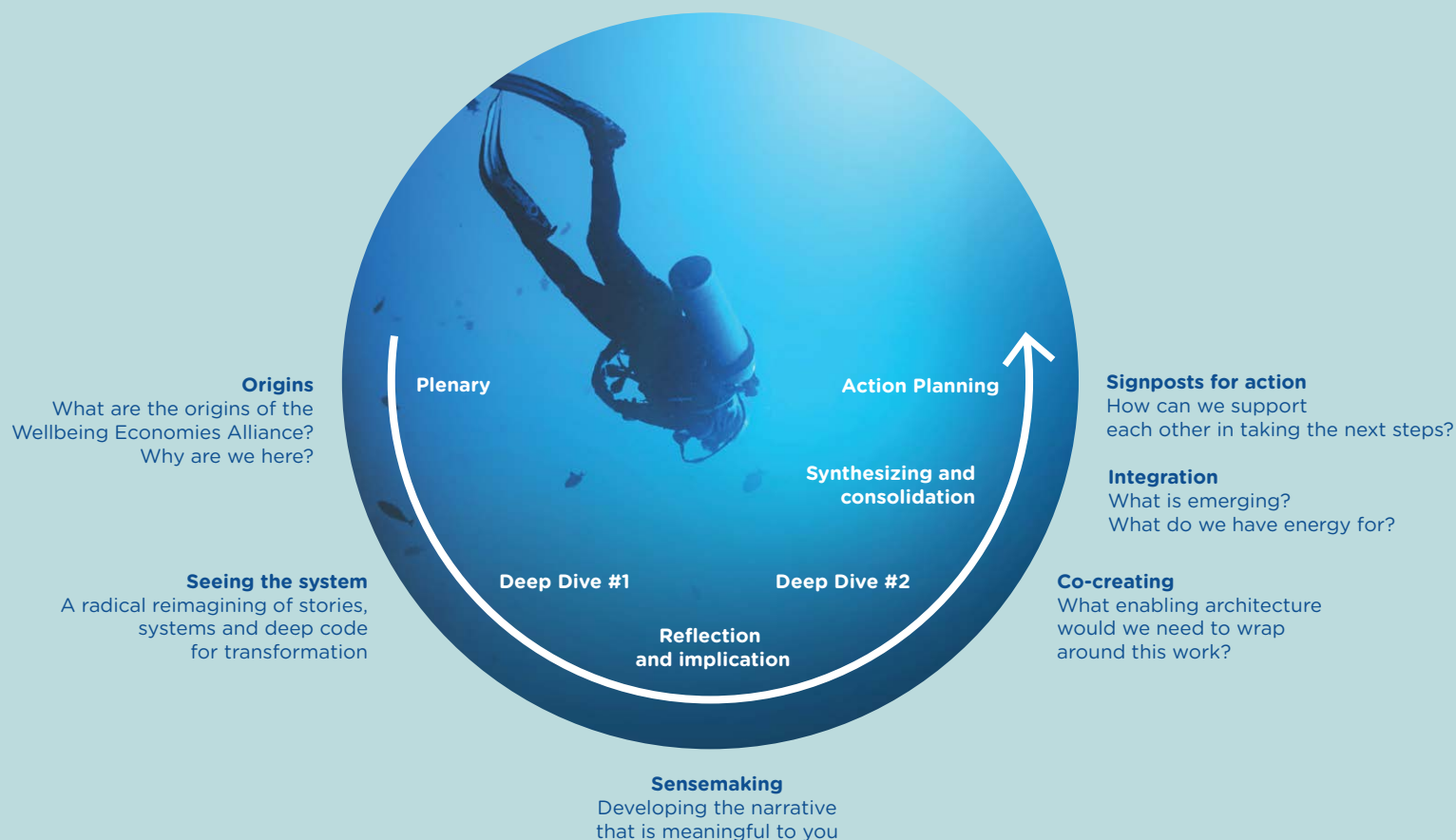




# About the Design Lab

**The goal of the design lab for a Well-being Economies Alliance Canada hub (WE All CAN) was co-creation through generative dialogue.** There were five sessions in the design lab, each tailored to enable participants to delve deeper in to the thinking and doing of systems transformation. As well as three plenary sessions focused on origins, synthesis and action, participants were divided into smaller cohorts for two ‘deep dives’.

In these deep dives, participants were invited to imagine what paradigm shift might be required to transform Turtle Island’s economic ‘operating system’ as well as the action-enhancing architecture that would support the emergence of a new economic purpose. These smaller groups enabled the space for dialogue, dreaming and diversity of perspectives. The following visual shows the ‘milestones’ along the participant journey.



*Rather than reproduce ‘meeting notes’, this illustrated record captures the essence of the design lab dialogues, through a synthesis of the common themes that emerged. In particular, it focuses on the ‘pillars of transformation’ that were identified by participants and which could become the foundations of the We ALL Can hub going forward.*

# A Re-imagined Purpose



Participants were asked “**What could a radically re-imagined purpose of the economic system be? What can you barely dare to imagine?**”

A range of common purposes emerged, summarised below.

## Thriving

- A circular and regenerative economy, one that is iterative and gets better over time as we learn
- Reciprocity and regeneration
- The thriving of all beings and all life, not just humans
- Where families are thriving rather than barely surviving
- A culture that prioritises inner wellbeing
- A system that encourages and generates collective healing

## Meaning

- A world where people can find meaning and purpose in their lives – creativity, pleasure, spiritual reawakening
- A broader ingredient list beyond financially oriented ones – meaning in life, spirituality, self-expression, connections, relationships

## Connected to place

- An economic system locally designed to redistribute goods so that all organisms can thrive and provide for future generations
- From land use to land relationships, where we are rooted and understand the relationship to family and land
- An alternative way to think about us in treaty with land, even in micro treaties in urban contexts
- We see parks and green roofs and community gardens everywhere
- We develop empathy with ecosystems and trees and water
- Sourced locally, used widely
- Rediscovering the commons and what it means to have access to commons and for the commons to be a priority

## Agency

- Choice rather than being dictated to
- Transform people’s own notions of power
- Un-trapping ourselves

## Diversity

- People have a choice to belong to a variety of communities
- There is space for diversity, rather than standardisation
- A society based on respect for diversity and respect for everyone
- Changes occur the worldview/ framing of how we think about diversity and pluralism

# A Re-imagined Purpose



“Going back to the land... we are the land.”

“What is your seed for the future?”

## Pauses

- You can hear silence and the sounds are not of engines
- We've changed our vision of time
- There is no such thing as rush hour.

## Equity

- All get a fair start in order to achieve collective aspirations
- A system that removes barriers to accessibility
- A system that recognises all forms of privilege
- Redistribution of wealth and income, of land

## New ways of knowing and being

- We don't tell people to think outside the box. We tell them to think inside the circle
- We no longer live in a society built on hierarchy (a triangle). We have moved to a circle
- Centrality of love - by helping people overcoming fear and moving towards love
- A shift in values and a shift in what we assume to be true creates new realities

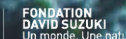
## Accountability

- There are planetary levels of accountability and transparency and through all levels of system



# Principles

Throughout the design lab, principles for how the WE All CAN hub should work were articulated. Key reoccurring principles are included below:



Equity. Your **blood** is the same as mine. It is no different.

Leadership as ‘transmitting **energy** and inspiration’.

Valuing human ways of connection as well as **connections** with each other and the land. It’s about returning to the land. We are the land.

Being **playful, patient and listening** to each other’s stories.

Start from a place of **healing and repairing trust**.

**With relationships at the heart** of the way we make change happen, versus a transactional approach of modern society.

**Celebrate difference** and recognise lived experience. People will have different reasons for joining the table and that is ok.

**Holding to the quiet, stopping, listening**, slowing down, decelerating. Dropping our egos and building on the ideas of people who were marginalised.

Creating the **space** to connect and imagine together – the invitation matters.

Pushing the boundaries of **language and ways of communicating** and ways of knowing.

There is such diversity even while, there is a universal experience of **wellbeing**.



# Involution

**By Kevin Sutton**

Poet, facilitator, and freelance change-maker  
and WE All CAN lab participant



This is how I fill my lungs, every breath a  
new step a new life begun a new song sung  
every exhale endorses gale forces in the  
natural course of the setting sun  
in the twilight arises keen sight, one last  
full moon lights one last silent night  
in the coming dark the healer grips his staff,  
tired of tending wounds he seeks a peace  
that lasts  
with each stride a path through the dusk  
unfolds a rising tide inside a new story is  
told  
he shifts his grip in the face of a script  
unknown a burning seed sown now a  
warrior grown  
with heart and mind instead of sword and  
shield because a man is only wounded by  
the weapons he wields  
This is how I get my way make universal  
service my purpose every day create  
change  
every verse rehearses like a lyrical circus  
that converts these words into the way that  
I pray  
in the same way I play engage in fair trade  
pay waiting in grace for cycles to come  
back my way

the warrior healer feels his spirit lift feels the  
underlying essence of the earth's surface shift  
voices rise with eyes that see through lies  
and the few that rule feel their walls shake  
with war cries  
warrior healer sense deep fear on both  
sides the real point gets lost when their own  
points collide  
because if I point one finger three fingers  
point back at me because there's no room  
for blame in a quantum cosmic tapestry  
This is how I answer that call how the earth  
revolves as global conflict resolves then our  
species can evolve  
anger and tears cannot make the case clear it's  
time to face fears and treat all beings as peers  
what if all soldiers were educated as social  
engineers what if mothers ran government  
with all teachers revered  
what if the warrior healer within each of us  
emerged what if greed and aggression as  
motives were purged  
what if the value of life to which each of  
us clings was in yearning to learn why the  
caged bird sings  
what if warrior healers were what children  
dreamed to be what if trust in god could be  
between you and me

what if caring and forgiving were cool ways  
to be what if our paper money was worth  
more as a tree  
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# Pillars of Transformation



Across the design lab, participants explored emerging narratives, seeds of the future, re-imagined purpose and shifting the underlying paradigms of the current system. Through these conversations, a series of 'pillars' emerged that can inform both the enabling architecture and the action agenda of the hub.

They have been synthesised in to the seven pillars below:

1. Embracing **story telling**
2. Building **new narratives**
3. Embedding diversity, pluralism and **different ways of knowing**
4. Holding **the circle**
5. Balancing **fast and slow**
6. Building on **what already exists**
7. Designing for distributed agency and **momentum**

*The combination of fast and slow components makes the system resilient, along with the way the differently paced parts affect each other. Fast learns, slow remembers. Fast proposes, slow disposes. Fast is discontinuous, slow is continuous. Fast and small instructs slow and big by accrued innovation and occasional revolution. Slow and big controls small and fast by constraint and constancy. Fast gets all our attention, slow has all the power. All durable dynamic systems have this sort of structure; it is what makes them adaptable and robust.*

***The Clock Of The Long Now:  
Time and Responsibility***

*Steward Brand Basic Books 1999*

# Pillars of Transformation

1

## Embracing storytelling

How do we bring in the new storytellers?

Indigenous laws/lores and ethics come from our stories.

Our stories are embedded in our whole selves and a new framework for Turtle Island.

*We need to:*

- Create an inclusive process for articulating what a successful society looks like
- Tell stories using art in all of its forms to connect to people's hearts and souls and embody and take on what this could be
- Share stories where people can see themselves in the opportunity and potential, through ceremony. By witnessing, there's a responsibility to share more broadly
- Establish network of 'influencers' to share narratives – e.g. teachers, athletes, each other, movie makers

2

## Building new narratives

How do we retire old narratives and create new ones?

Everybody's story is just as important.

*We need to:*

- Create narratives about what we mean by a wellbeing economy and the many ways this is talked about and enacted
- While we might seek a unifying message and narrative, we must remember we are not trying to homogenize language or use only one metaphor. Whether “house, bubble, container, spider web”: we are all talking about the same thing and using different words – we need to create a big house, with so many of us – each using our own words and our own stories. Not just one tent or one story
- Build new narratives by using language of invitation and intention, ceremony and engagement

3

## Embedding diversity, pluralism and different ways of knowing

What might it mean to embed diversity and bring together different knowledge systems and ways of knowing, especially indigenous knowledges and cultures?

How do we instill this cultural framework in every aspect of what we are doing?

*We need to:*

- Focus on how ‘decolonising’ our minds, beliefs and language can make new realities possible
- Look to the foundations of indigenous ways of knowing, relating and governance - recognising that we need to build back from thousands of years of ways of seeing and knowing of First Peoples
- Incorporate the work of inner transformation (indigenous world views, spirit, shift of mindsets), as well as systems change

# Pillars of Transformation

## 4

### Holding the circle

How does the hub become a safe place to gather in circle and allow for trust and belonging and exploring? What would our ceremony be?

*We need to:*

- Be intentional about place and physically create spaces to allow for connection and groundedness – to each other, to space and place. This means getting out of classrooms, boardrooms, offices – the places we feel safe – and moving to other places where we can feel the earth, touch the water, connect with land, otherwise it is all just theory
- Find ways to engage the many people who are too traumatised by the situation we want to change, or who are engaged in surviving each day, putting food on the table and invite them to step in to the conversation
- Create a ceremonial space of a big house – the physical space of a house is relatable to everybody.

We must ask “what is our duty and responsibility within the house? What are our roles, how are we contributing?”

- Ask indigenous groups to share their positive working models to help us move to a different type of action
- Center different voices and be open to different perspectives, not just those with privilege. Ensure that black and indigenous communities are leading this work
- Learn how to listen – a new type of democracy
- Create safe spaces for truthful, open, diverse conversations, trust and authenticity, a place to share our trials and tribulations and embark on learning journeys
- Enable truth telling and emotional resiliency by holding in discomfort and supporting bravery
- Create wellbeing as we do the work - for ourselves and others, so we are modeling it.
- Build supports so people can remain present in the circle

## 5

### Balancing fast and slow

There is an awareness and a grappling with a real sense of urgency to do this quickly.

There is a recognition of the need to both fast and slow and avoid being reductive.

*We need to:*

- Create an emergent strategy that has enough flexibility to evolve and be co-created more widely over time as the network of authors increases
- Allow for different groups to work at different speeds – the alliances we create to help us build capacity once we’ve defined wellbeing will include champions, artists, politicians and each will have a different pace
- Hold spaces for conversation while taking action at the same time
- Slow down to build relationships (authenticity, mutuality, respect)
- Allow time for addressing inter-beingness and ceremony

# Pillars of Transformation

## 6

### Building on what already exists

How do we learn from what has been done?

What moves people, and what's been missing to date?

*We need to:*

- Work with what exists whilst simultaneously building new structures that make existing ones obsolete and allow something new to emerge
- Learn from the past
- Learn from other experiences (SDGs, New Zealand, Bhutan)
- Map out who is measuring and discussing well-being in Canada? What are we learning? Why is this important for us to consider shifting to a well-being economy? What has been done and what moves people?

## 7

### Designing for distributed agency and momentum

Our desire is to be inclusive and pluralistic. There are so many localised wellbeing initiatives and we want to connect across and build coherence.

How might we connect across and empower those that are already part of the well-being movement?

*We need to:*

- Clarify principles and goals but let people define the scoping for themselves, including boundaries
- Become a collaborative as a movement of movements - by mapping and then inviting related players to share their work and express their needs in creating a wellbeing economy in partnership with others.

- Encourage those who have been in collective action - whether they have been seeking change in their community or national policies - to hosting talking circles / ceremonies
- Create a mechanism to bring insights from these talking circles back to inform a larger group
- Create guiding principles for those ceremonies / talking circles (safe, respectful)
- Create high level guidance by answering FAQs on what is wellbeing / wellbeing economy/ measures to define success. These will guide and be further fleshed out through the talking circle conversations.

# Who Are We Inviting Into The Circle?



**In hearing from Dr David Suzuki, participants were reminded of the power and urgency of inviting in to the conversation those from very different worlds and worldviews.**

On the question of who else needs to be invited in to the ‘circle’ of the hub, there was consensus that diversity and inclusiveness are key. This includes inviting people with different perspectives and views than our own.

*Suggestions on who the hub should engage with included:*

- Those engaged to help decide the ‘ingredients’ of the hub
- Those who would benefit, including the systemically disadvantaged
- Our networks of likeminded others
- Young people moving in to future positions of power and privilege
- Private sector and mainstream business
- Finance Canada
- All Canadians
- Champions from across the political spectrum
- Allied think tanks
- Allies who desire change beyond the status quo
- Those sitting ‘across the aisle’ with opposing political views
- Others who may think differently than we do

# The Kitchen

By Kevin Sutton

Poet, facilitator, and freelance changemaker  
and WE All CAN lab participant



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Invited into the kitchen

A gathering of grandmothers hovering over  
the stove

Relationships are the starting place

The stock exchanged is in the chicken broth,  
differences of opinion in a beautiful blend of  
flavours

What helps move beyond this hub?

What shares and moves building out  
through the diversity of the world?

Welcoming

Relationship with the land is global

Re-establishing ourselves with land and  
nature and spaces, services, principles, and  
connection

Respect the land

The key ingredient of the interactions that is  
needed to transform and give the broth its  
healing properties

How do you artfully blend perspectives? Ah,  
this is the cooking of it

Accepting differences in harmony

Acknowledging an imperfect consensus

At the center of the conflict, the  
grandmothers tend the differences and  
demands

To shift and grow the tent, they add love

There is a fear of losing love that breeds  
disharmony

We all rail against it in our separate ways

But in that we are common

We find the collective in individuals

The is the hub

The shared vision

The grandmothers invest in their vision

Allow space for differences to be exchanged  
in harmony

To be welcomed and reframed

To include many ways forward toward the  
unknown

Thinking of this as a healing does not mean  
the pain will disappear

It means the hub is a place of resilience

As we come together to go through what  
we're going through

Just recovery

Stop speaking

Just listening

Understand

The flourishing of human potential is more  
than resilience

How do we get to that place of  
redistribution of responsibilities

that hold it all together

for an equitable distribution across

# Questions

While there were many suggestions throughout the dialogue, participants also grappled with a range of questions, many of which may inform the learning journey of the hub going forward.



## Alternative approaches to power

- Q Does power ever unseat itself?
- Q Do we need to get governments involved? How?
- Q Or is this something that will emerge from the margins?
- Q How do we scale up from the local level?

## Time

- Q How could our relationship with time be different in wellbeing economies?

## The role of the sacred

- Q What might be the place or role of the sacred in wellbeing economies?

## The thriving wellbeing of all life

- Q What might the definition and meaning of the 'thriving wellbeing of all life' be?

## Civil disobedience

- Q Does this have a role and what would that look like? How do we honour that space?

## Leverage points

- Q Do policies matter? Or are there many other ways to create transformation?
- Q Of the leverage points available to us, what are our priorities?

## Capacity and readiness

- Q What are the abilities needed to work at the individual and systems level?

## Decision making

- Q How do we design and imagine the parameters of a wellbeing economy so they infuse decisions at all levels?





# Book Club

Across the design lab, participants were generous in sharing references, readings, videos and other resources in the zoom chat. These have been collated below.



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**Tsawalk: an indigenous approach to local crisis - Umeek / E. Richard Atleo**

[Reference link](#)

**The Makarrata Project Out Now  
Midnight Oil**

[Reference Link](#)

**Anthropocene: The Human Epoch  
The Anthropocene Project**

[Reference Link](#)

**Makers Valley Partnership's Response  
To The Impact Of Covid-19 In The Valley**

[Reference Link](#)

**Criterion Institute**

[Reference Link](#)

**Cognitive Edge - The Children's Party Story  
introduces the nature of systems and  
complexity through the use of a simple  
metaphor that resonates widely**

[Reference Link](#)

**The Clock Of The Long Now  
Time and responsibility**

[Reference Link](#)

**Timescapes of Modernity - Barbara Adam**

[Reference Link](#)

**Dialogue: The Art Of Thinking Together  
Sand Talk - William Issacs**

[Reference Link](#)

**Property Rights / Property Wrongs:  
Micro-Treaties with the Earth**

[Reference Link](#)

**Building Better Systems - A Green Paper on  
System Innovation**

**From ROCKWOOL Foundation by Charlie  
Leadbeater and Jennie Winhall**

[Reference Link](#)

**New paper on systems change and gender:  
Bridging fields of feminist systems:  
ecosystems for gender equity  
Systems Sanctuary**

[Reference Link](#)

**Bayo Akomolafe**

[Reference Link](#)

**SEWA**

[Reference Link](#)

**YouTube video of Elder Albert speaking on  
two-eyed seeing**

(he's also written a number of academic  
articles on the concept as well)

[Reference Link](#)

**Cultura Bank in Sweden. The model is quite  
close to the example of 'open banking'.**

[Reference Link](#)

**A quality piece on mutual aid/banking**

[Reference Link](#)

**Emergent Strategy - Adrienne Maree Brown**

[Reference Link](#)

**Also relevant to discussion of shared values**

[Reference Link](#)

**Loss Leader - No One Is Coming To Rescue Us  
Siri Agrell**

[Reference Link](#)

**Facing Gaia. Latour, Bruno. (2013).  
Six lectures on the political theology of  
nature', Gifford Lectures on Natural Religion,  
18-28.**

[Reference Link](#)

**From Uneconomic Growth To A Steady-State  
Economy. Daly, H. E. (2014). Edward Elgar  
Publishing.**

[Reference Link](#)

**The Real Wealth of Nations:  
Creating a Caring Economics.  
Riane Eisler (2007). Berret-Koehler.**

[Reference Link](#)



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