AN INITIATIVE BY

collaboratio HELVETICA

NOVA HELVETIA

DIE NEUE SCHWEIZ
LA NOUVELLE SUISSE
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THE NEW SWITZERLAND

Insights for a healthy post-COVID-19 Switzerland

Reflection papers on the topics one health & climate, gender & inclusion, education, democracy, funding systemic change, sustainable cities & neighbourhoods and storytelling written by the working groups of the Nova Helvetia project

Table of contents

3 Nova Helvetia, an explorative journey towards a healthy post-COVID-19 Switzerland

5 About collaboratio helvetica

Reflection papers

6 One Health & Climate

16 Towards an Inclusive Future

26 Is Education ready for the shift?

31 Transforming towards a democracy of the people

36 Funding the future

43 Observations & Reflections toward regenerative cities and communities

52 Storytelling for a regenerative culture

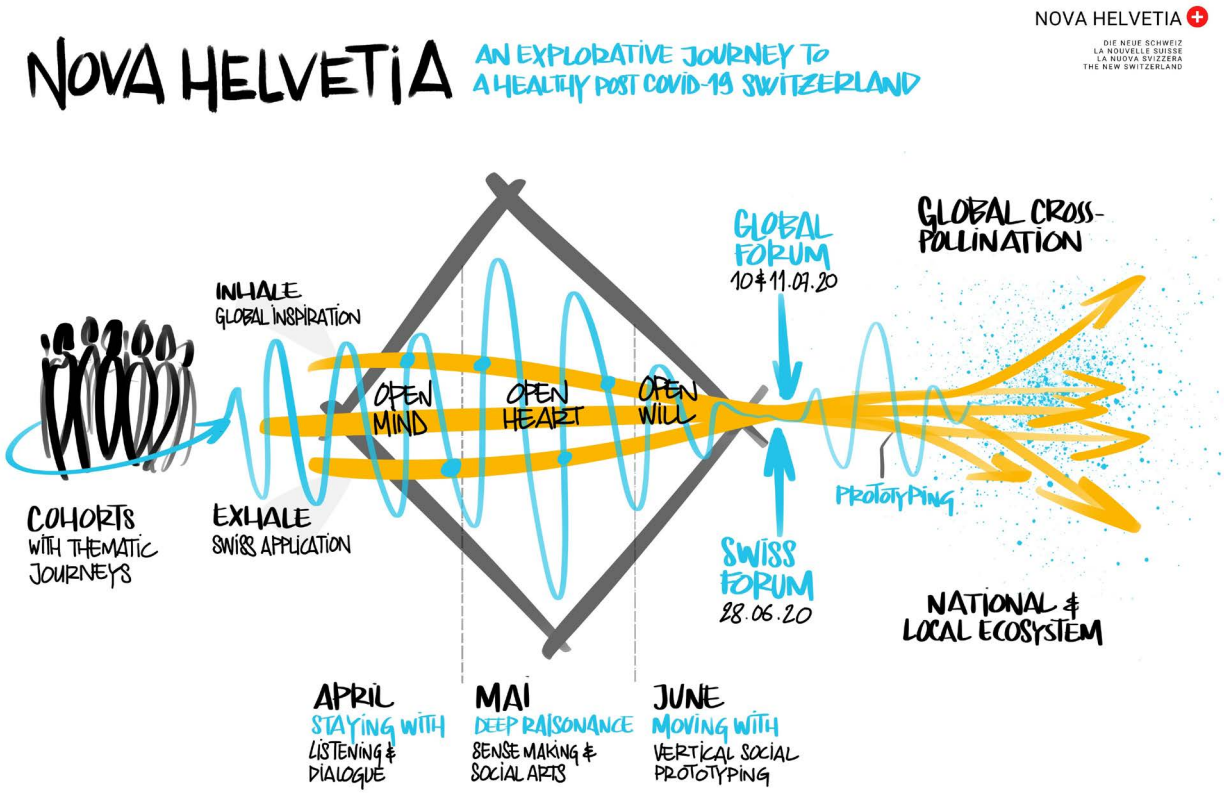
Nova Helvetia, an explorative journey towards a healthy post-COVID-19 Switzerland

By the end of April 2020, as a response to the Corona crisis collaboratio helvetica launched the project “Nova Helvetia”, an explorative journey towards a healthy post-COVID-19 Switzerland. With the Corona crisis, we were facing an unprecedented disruption. Systems we relied on before came to the brink of collapse and immediate actions were needed on multiple levels. At the same time, beyond the much needed addressing of the symptoms, we urgently have to dedicate time and resources to understand the root causes that led to the crisis more fully, to become collectively more aware of their inter-relatedness and to reflect together in order to find the path to wise(r) actions.

Nova Helvetia was our proposal to collectively address the urgent need to reinvent the human-made systems that are causing and aggravating the current crisis, or being demonstrated as inadequate by it. Inspired by the GAIA Journey initiated by the Presencing Institute, we launched this 3 months process to engage motivated individuals in sense-making, discovering the root causes and sharing reflections and possible solutions that address them. In the process thematic working groups have formed, focussing on specific topics or questions to explore.

Based on the methodology of Theory U, we accompanied these thematic working groups in a deep reflection, research and sensing process in order to produce new stories and a reflection paper including main insights, guiding questions looking ahead, and first signals of the future. This publication contains the 7 reflection papers written by the working groups.

The exploration phase of Nova Helvetia culminated in the Swiss Forum, an online event on 28th of June 2020. On this day, the outcomes and outputs were shared, as well as further cross-thematic exploration enabled. Based on their main insights, after the Swiss Forum the working groups continue to develop new ideas and solution prototypes and start implementing them.



Nova Helvetia working groups

SDGs 3 & 13: One health & climate

COVID-19 has delivered a stark lesson about the global interconnectedness of human, animal and planetary health, known as the One Health concept. In the times of a drastically warming climate, the decisions that are taken during the next 18 months will fundamentally define the health of all future living beings. During the past two months, we have been sensing into the system to understand what actions would be needed to connect the diverse voices in Switzerland to collaborate under the One Health umbrella. What can be done to drive forward a holistic approach towards a healthier future?

SDGs 5 & 10: Gender & inclusion: Creating an inclusive future

We researched and reflected upon the effects that the COVID-19 crisis had on gender relations, with a particular focus on women*[1] and people belonging to marginalised groups. We focused on narratives around care work, the distribution of and value differential between productive and reproductive work, changes in the world of work, gender representation in the media and increased marginalisation of certain identities within the framework of our socio-economic system. We asked questions: How is the COVID-19 crisis disproportionately affecting women* and people in precarious socio-economic situations? How might we ensure that there is equitable representation for ALL voices when approaching the process of (re)shaping our socio-economic future in the wake of COVID-19?

SDG 4: Renewing education

Our education system is based on the principles of functional knowledge learning, underlined by timetables, instructions and the school clock, where productivity and performance are key elements. Personal development and natural growth are undervalued, both in a scholastic and in a corporate environment. Many economic sectors are in the midst of a huge transformation process and industrial processes are being completely automated. The question arises, as to how this system can be changed, to focus on future skills with tailored individual support? A new culture of self-organised learning is needed, to empower the current and future generations to resolve ecological, economic and social issues.

SDG 16: Democracy in transformation

Nova Helvetia created a safe space to explore core issues affecting emerging needs in our democracy, to identify and address places of disconnect between those who are in charge and the citizens, and to reflect beyond these boundaries. We acknowledge that democracy in Switzerland is at a point, where it faces profound and complex problems, calling for solutions that require a closer interaction and exchange, bridging the gap between politicians and citizens. In order to strengthen Swiss democracy, there is a need for interactive democratic mechanisms on various topics, enabling a sharing of knowledge, open discussions and collaboration, in developing prototypes of democratic processes.

1 We use the * in recognition of the many different dimensions – biological, cultural, social, societal – which make up the gender identity of each individual person. When we refer to "women*," we therefore include all humans who self-identify as women, whether by nature of their assigned sex, gender expression, or gender identity.

SDG 17: Funding systemic change

Many innovative projects, particularly those geared towards systemic change, are struggling to get funding in Switzerland. To find out why this is so, we explored the workings of the funding mechanism, on the basis of the iceberg model, with a focus on foundations. Based on our journey, we conclude that many foundations might become truer to their mission and more effective, if they moved from expectations of immediate results, to a long-term flexible monitoring perspective geared towards systemic change. Among the prototypes that have emerged is a collaborative and peer-to-peer funding allocation mechanism within Nova Helvetia.

SDG 11: Sustainable cities and neighbourhoods

The Corona pandemic challenged our systems, especially revealed the complexity and dependencies in our cities, exposedour interconnection, which allowed most people to see how deeply we are entangled with each other. The disruptive processes and our creative or damaging responses during the last 5 months exposed our economic and financial models, social inequalities and the disregard for eco-systems, and showed that we are already in a transition due to long standing unsustainable practices. Reemerging within the fabric of urban life, woven of contributions and relatedness, we see once again families, neighbours and volunteers caring for each other, providing social support and regenerating the meaning of community. It was a beginning - but how to continue the work? ; How and when do we make the time to come together, in order to find hidden potential and agency to create regenerative cities that are blending back into natural systems?

SDG 17: Storytelling for a regenerative future

The working group ‘Storytelling for a regenerative future’ explores a means to inspire each other, to engage and to activate the collective potential for a regenerative culture. Stories build bridges that have the potential to overcome the root causes of disconnection from ourselves, each other and nature and help to reconnect for the benefits of all. We feel that reconnection has to start from a place of an open and curious heart, listening to people outside of our own bubble. By providing space for sharing, careful listening and harvesting the essence of underlying stories, we will eventually activate the collective potential for shifting towards a regenerative culture.

About collaboratio helvetica

collaboratio helvetica is an initiative which originated from the belief that the challenges of our time require new forms of collaboration and a new, holistic way of thinking. Switzerland has a long tradition of collaboration and dialogue across language barriers and religious divides. We therefore believe in Switzerland's unique potential and participatory approach to contribute to a change towards more ecological responsibility, humanity and the common good. collaboratio helvetica uses innovative approaches to facilitate this transformation and creates space for dialogue, collaboration and the testing of holistic solutions. We empower committed people and organisations to shift deeply ingrained attitudes and mindsets, to conduct dialogues more effectively, to implement new forms of collaboration and thus collectively rethink and reshape the Switzerland of tomorrow. Thanks to future labs, the development of an ever-expanding network and community of like-minded people has enabled collaboratio helvetica to make an important contribution towards a sustainable Switzerland.

"You can't solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them."

- Albert Einstein

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One Health & Climate

Case Report: An explorative journey to a healthy post COVID-19 Switzerland

(SDGs 3 & 13)

About Nova Helvetia

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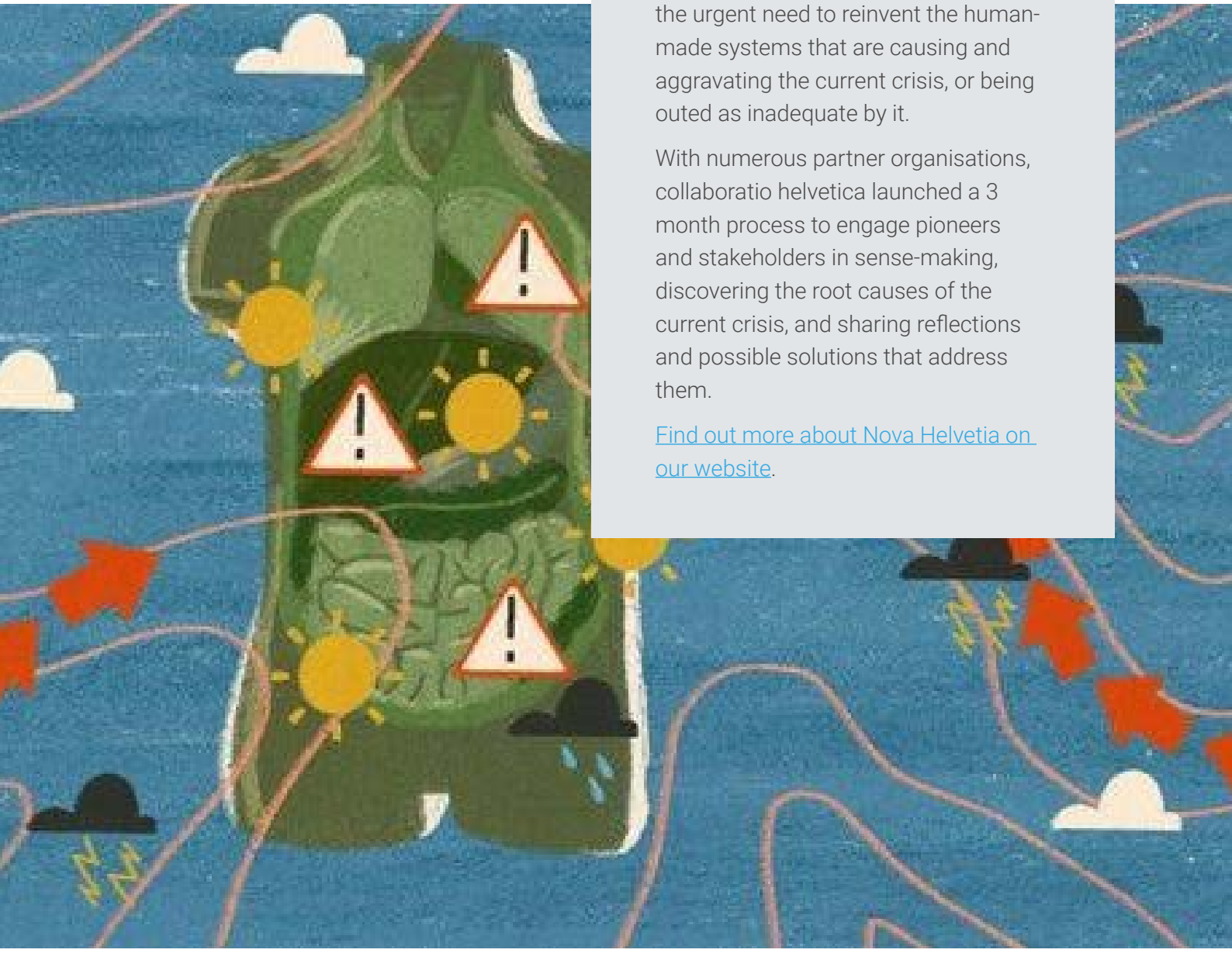
With numerous partner organisations, collaboratio helvetica launched a 3 month process to engage pioneers and stakeholders in sense-making, discovering the root causes of the current crisis, and sharing reflections and possible solutions that address them.

Find out more about Nova Helvetia on our website.



This project is supported by Engagement Migros, a development fund of the Migros group.

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3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

13 CLIMATE ACTION

In a nutshell

COVID-19 has delivered a stark lesson about the global interconnectedness of human, animal and planetary health, known as the One Health concept. In the times of a drastically warming climate, the decisions that are taken during the next 18 months will fundamentally define the health of all future living beings.

During the past two months, we have been sensing into the system to understand what actions would be needed to connect the diverse voices in Switzerland to collaborate under the One Health umbrella. What can be done to drive forward a holistic approach towards a healthier future?

What To Do in a Global Medical Emergency

The COVID-19 pandemic has come as a global shock. It has taught us many different lessons on life, but most importantly it has underlined the importance of acknowledging the interconnectedness of human, animal and planetary health – known as *One Health*. What has been missing in the public health debate in Switzerland over the past few months is a more holistic perspective. Even before SARS-CoV-2 made the jump from animals to humans and started spreading around the world, our planet has been in a state of *medical emergency*.

> *"The pandemic is a reminder of the intimate and delicate relationship between people and planet. Any efforts to make our world safer are doomed to fail unless they address the critical interface between people and pathogens, and the existential threat of climate change, that is making our Earth less habitable."*
>
> WHO Director-General Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus
> Address to the 73rd World Health Assembly, May 18th 2020.

The Patient: Our Planet.

The Lancet Report of 2019 describes climate change as the biggest global health threat of the 21st century.[1] This begs the question: Why do we, as a society, keep systems alive that produce outcomes that nobody actually wants?

In order to address the urgent need to reinvent the systems that are causing and aggravating the current crisis, we have formed a group on *One Health and Climate* as part of the Nova Helvetia journey. The *One Health* approach offers a holistic view on the concept of health that we deemed fitting for our exploration. Over a period of two months we have been sensing into the system to understand what actions would need to be taken to connect the diverse voices in Switzerland to collaborate under the One Health umbrella.

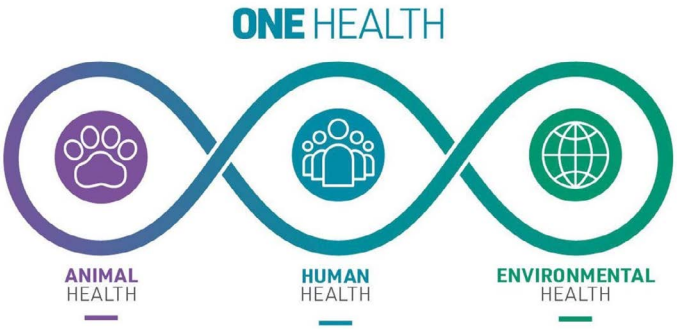
Or speaking in medical terms: We have been working as 'system doctors', doing a health check up of our system, trying to understand our patient's condition and the root cause of its symptoms. We also suggest a treatment plan based on the investigation of what can be done to drive forward a holistic approach towards a healthier future. Let's explore the case report together.

Welcome to a systemic Health Check of Our Planet

Before we start our Check-up...

...we would like to provide you with a small introduction to what tools we are using. Being presented with multiple highly complex systems makes it important to be aware of the different levels on which our patient can be examined: There is the planetary level, a transnational level including trade organisations (e.g. EU), a country-level, a regional or cantonal level, a city-level, an organisational level and an individual level. It is important to note that all of them are fundamentally interconnected and influence each other. Both top-down and bottom-up as well as horizontal approaches are required to meet the 2030 Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) for climate action. For this health check up – consisting of this reflection paper and our stakeholder map – we focused on organisations and political entities in Switzerland using the methodology of 'Theory U' as a tool to sense our patient on the mind, heart and will level.

1 Nick Watts, Markus Amann, Prof. Nigel Arnell et al. (2019) The 2019 report of The Lancet Countdown on health and climate change: ensuring that the health of a child born today is not defined by a changing climate.
Image Source: https://www.depsys.ch/news/depsys-launches-free-grid-health-check-reports-for-power-grid-managers/



Source: Centralvet

As with every health check in the Emergency Room we start with a general overview including the symptoms, medical history and a clinical examination (mind level). Then we run a thorough scan, in order to get a grasp of what our eyes cannot see and sense, on the system (heart level). In order to get a full understanding of the root causes of the condition we are facing, we use further investigative methods of systemic change (will level).

I. General Overview: The Medical History & Symptoms (Mind level)

Our planet is in a state of acute fever: Average global temperatures have risen by 1°C compared to pre-industrial times. The thermometer corroborates the continuous temperature rise in Switzerland. 2019 was the fifth warmest since the beginning of temperature measurement in 1864.[2] The UN Environment reports show that greenhouse gas emissions must drop rapidly to 25 gigatons by 2030 to limit global temperature rise to 1.5°C. Instead, emissions have risen at a rate of 1.5% per year in the last decade, stabilising only briefly between 2014 and 2016[3].

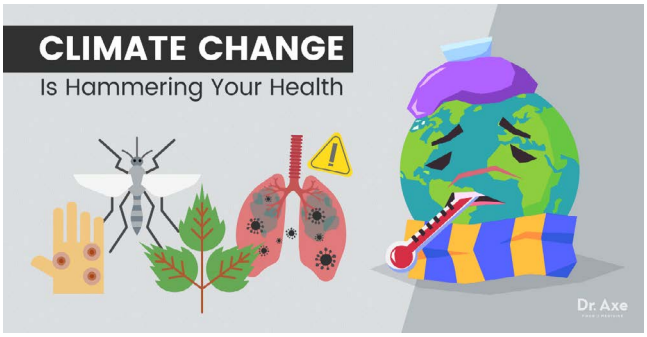
The symptoms triggered by the changing climate vary from extreme weather events such as heat waves in Siberia, huge forest fires in the Amazon rainforest and Australia to massive ice cover losses in the Arctic and retreat of glaciers around the world. Talking of glaciers – climate scenarios paint a grim picture for Switzerland: Hotter summers, heavy rainfall, shorter snow seasons and a retreat of the snow line.[4]

The constant pushing against our planetary boundaries massively impacts the lives and health of billions of people and animals around the world. The health impacts of global environmental (including climatic) changes are well documented and recognised by the international health community: 1 out of 8 people worldwide dies because of air pollution and more than 200 animal species are going extinct every day. Globally, an estimated 24% of the burden of disease and 23% of all deaths can be attributed to environmental factors[5].

In Switzerland, probably not the first country to consider when it comes to climate change threats, the health impacts can not be ignored either: We can already observe more elderly people dying due to heat strokes, a prolonged hay fever season leading to more allergies and asthma, and the warmer climate allowing the tiger mosquito to survive throughout the year, potentially introducing diseases like Chikungunya and Dengue Fever to the local population.[6]

2 MeteoSwiss (2020) Klimareport 2019.
3 UN Environment (2019) Emissions Gap Report
4 National Centre for Climate Services (2018) Climate Scenarios Switzerland
5 WHO(2020) Public health, environmental and social determinants of health (PHE)
6 Urbinello D., Künzli N. (2015) Le changement climatique concerne aussi la santé. Bulletin des médecins suisses. 2015; 96(31–32):1087–1088

The COVID-19 pandemic comes as an additional symptom to the ecological crisis: like 75% of all the other infectious diseases that have emerged over the past three decades, COVID-19 is a zoonotic disease, meaning it has been transmitted from animals to humans.[7] Causes for the emergence of zoonosis are wildlife trade, animal husbandry, deforestation, and the destruction of natural ecosystems.



II. Clinical examination: Sensing the System (Mind level)

By now we have come to realize: The way we currently live as a global society is not sustainable, and our patient's life is in acute danger. Time to move on in our health check-up and sense the system. It is our goal to really listen to the system and find out what is driving it. We, hence, take our stethoscope and listen closely to what is going on in Switzerland: What do we hear? How fast and regular is the heartbeat?

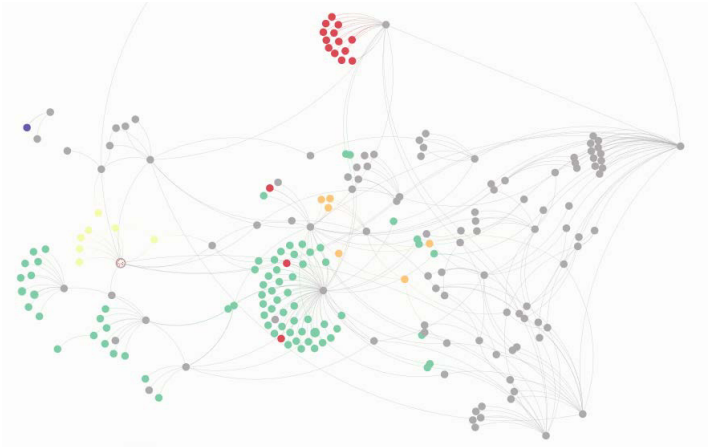
The thing that stands out during our examination is that we are not the only ones actively taking examining our sick patient: A multitude of other people, organisations and initiatives in Switzerland have declared it their mission to fight our patient's symptoms. And the approaches couldn't be more diverse – some are filling the streets and raising attention about our patient's health, others focus on searching for technological solutions and others again are not even in the emergency department but sitting in the sun and drinking coffee claiming that it is their full right to do so. The ones standing beside us in the emergency room will most likely be concentrating all their energy on one symptom such as banning plastic bags or factory farming. Still, despite all those people, we haven't made nearly enough progress in saving our patient's life.

As system doctors we notice: The room is actually so crowded that it is hard to get an overview and know who is working on what. A lot of resources are being wasted and there are few systemic and integrated approaches that join forces to understand what is inducing the different symptoms and address their root causes. We see the need of getting a closer look at what is going on in the One Health field in Switzerland.

7 Jones, K., Patel, N., Levy, M. et al.(2008) Global trends in emerging infectious diseases

III. The Scan: Looking at the underlying Structures & Bones (Heart level)

Let's put our patient in the scanning machine to reveal the inner structures, organs and bones of our system:



Own Representation: link

What comes out is a complex – and definitely incomplete – image of the different stakeholders around One Health in Switzerland (view map here). Analysing this vast stakeholder map and building on the WHO Manifesto released in May 2020 we can identify several leverage points to further investigate:

- **Ban the use of taxpayer money to fund pollution**: If the legal framework allows for it, pension funds as a major institutional investor have the potential to pour large financial resources into climate-friendly solutions and ensure a quick, healthy and socially just energy transition.
- **Promote healthy, sustainable food systems**: Emitting about a quarter of the overall greenhouse gas emissions, the food system is currently the leading contributor towards the warming of the planet. In doing this, it is also contributing towards the deterioration of animal and human health. Diseases caused by either lack of access to food, or consumption of unhealthy, high calorie diets are now the single biggest cause of global ill health.[8] Sustainable food systems could be designed in alignment with the One Health concept and local farmers, as well as retailers, play a key role in this change.
- **Build healthy, liveable cities**: Rethink transportation: As cities have relatively high population densities and are saturated with traffic, many trips can be taken more efficiently by public transport, walking and cycling, than by private cars. Geneva has reacted to the COVID-19 crisis by massively expanding cycle lanes - enabling "physically distant" transport during the crisis and enhancing economic activity and quality of life, even if this is a temporary measure.[9]
- **Invest in climate-resilient health services**: Educating healthcare professionals, improving their working conditions and reducing the ecological footprint of healthcare facilities are essential guardrails against future disasters and offer some of the best returns for society.
- **Use the health narrative and move towards a health in all policies approach**: Health workers are the single most trusted profession in the world[10]. They thus have a special responsibility and potential to raise awareness about the concept of One Health and the health impacts of

8 World Health Organization (May 2020): WHO Manifesto for a healthy and green Post-Covid-Recovery

9 RTS (2020) A Genève, des pistes cyclables temporaires sont mises en place pour encourager le public à ne pas prendre les transports publics.

10 https://www.ipsos.com/sites/default/files/ct/news/documents/2019-11/trust-in-professions-veracity-index-2019-slides.pdf

the climate crisis. They should be involved in all political decision making, in order to ensure that short- and long-term health repercussions are documented and health will be protected.

- **Protect and preserve the source of human health – Nature**: Thinking of nature as a stakeholder in our system can help our understanding of systemic One Health thinking. During our analysis we realised that we had completely missed out on adding nature, animals, forests and ecosystems as stakeholders on their own and wondered what would happen if they were to be integrated into our understanding of ourselves and our system and hence to be considered in the making of governmental regulations.

IV. Further Clinical Investigations: Looking at the Root Causes (Will level)

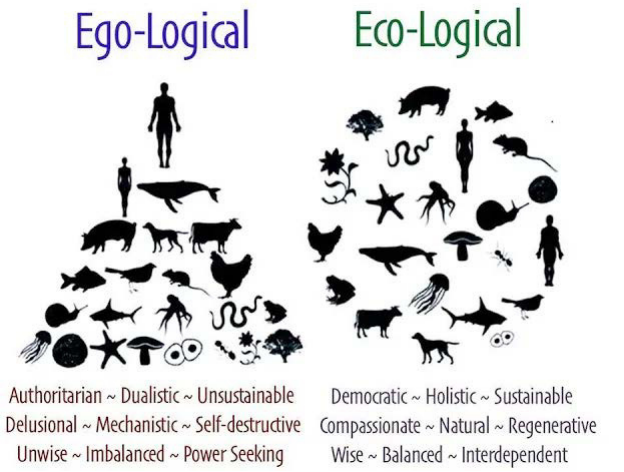
Having identified some leverage points for systemic change, we now move our investigation to an even deeper level to understand what current underlying paradigms and beliefs hinder us from activating those leverage points and shifting towards a healthier future. For this, we need to have an open heart and will, so take a second to understand your own concept of health: What does health mean for you? What makes you come alive?

This method of further investigation led to the following insights:

First, the model and system we have built and operate in is a strongly **anthropocentric** one. From the financial system to the economy to organisational focus, neoclassicism positions the human being in the centre, in a fundamentally different and special place. An innate disconnect between the planet and the other sentient beings and humankind is thus created, which ultimately leads to an imbalance and a sense of separation from the roots/ nature. This results in the concept of the planet as an object rather than a living entity.

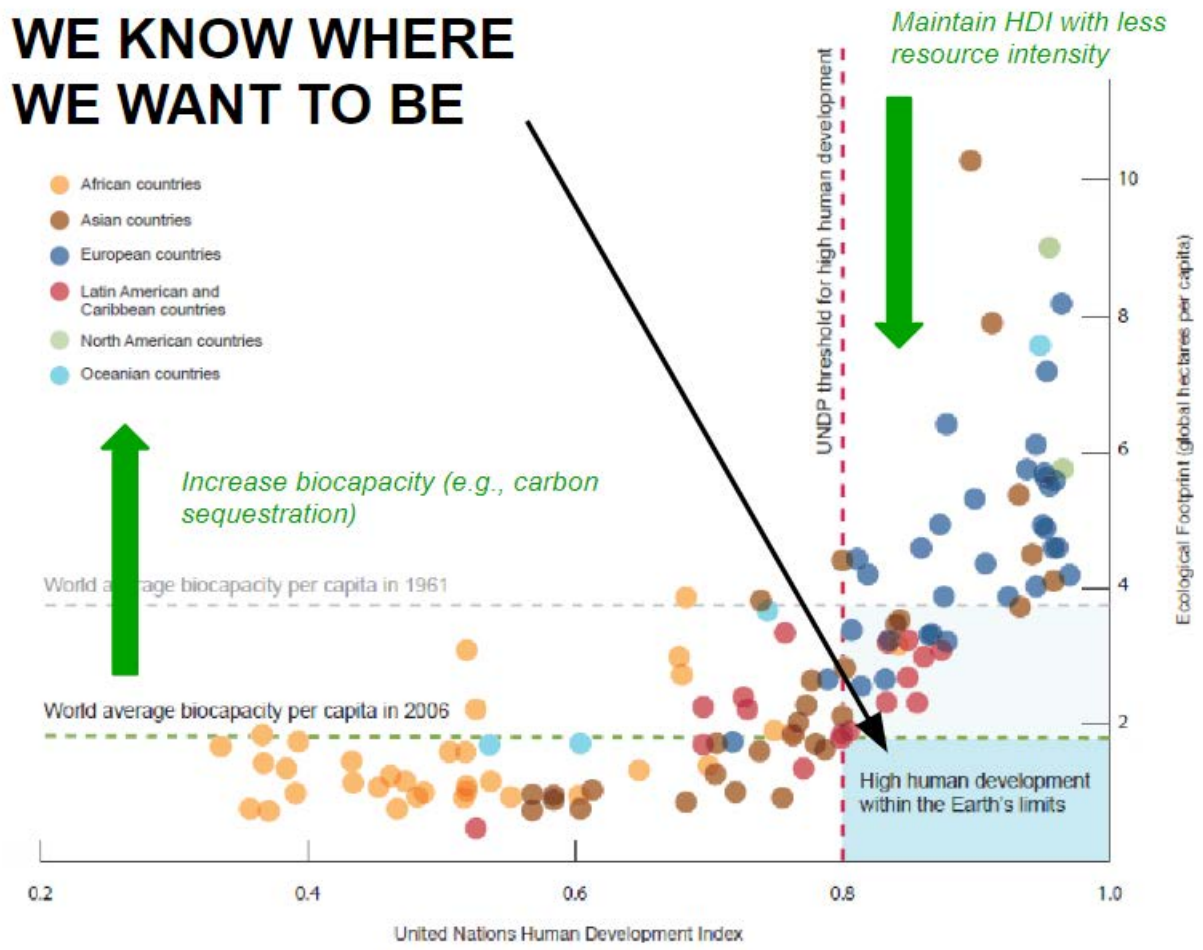
Second, Neoclassical theory, on which our economy is based today, carries the ontological assumption of **methodological individualism**, meaning that the whole is equal to the sum of its parts. That assumption leads us to see the world as a cake with a predetermined size. This understanding naturally triggers a sense of competition for the (perceived) limited resources. Individualistic thinking is aligned with this thought pattern. This individualistic approach to solving problems leads to one-sided thinking, competition, and silo creation for most projects. However, climate change is a complex global challenge which might need new ways of thinking and of working, i.e. in collaboration across sectors and levels.

Third, as a result of the previous two considerations the capitalist socio-economic **concept of ownership** further separates human beings from their natural habitat and One Health. The social contract to own land shows how the current thought model places the human above everything else, and sees land, and the planet, merely as a resource to be purchased. The assumption being: The more one possesses, the better. And once the land "belongs" to the individual, they are free to do whatever they wish with it, often neglecting the numerous systemic repercussions of these actions.



Source: permatree.org

Our Vision of a Healthy Future



Source: http://www.footprintnetwork.org/images/uploads/Ecological_Wealth_of_Nations.pdf

It's 2030. We have reached the common understanding that in order to live sustainably and healthily on this planet for generations to come, we must see ourselves as an inherent part of the whole within the Earth's limits rather than a species that is separate and superior. We have found our freedom within the planetary boundaries and taken full advantage of the two things on this planet that are **un**limited: solar energy and human creativity. By acknowledging the interconnectedness of human, animal and planetary health and joining our forces, we have made a tremendous step forward towards health equity and have even reduced the financial costs of healthcare due to optimal use of resources.

Prescription for a Healthy & Green Recovery

Our above mentioned clinical findings and insights lead to the following prescription:

1. **Pause for a moment & understand the interconnectedness of the system**: There is a lot going on already, many organisations and groups are working on and contributing towards a more sustainable and healthy future. Take the time to learn about the different stakeholders in Switzerland (view map here) and become aware of all the resources around you. Synergise.

2. **Move towards a health in all policies approach**: The following leverage points could be further investigated:
    - Stop using taxpayers money to fund pollution.
    - Promote healthy, sustainable food systems.
    - Invest in climate-resilient health services.
    - Build healthy liveable cities.
    - Use the health narrative.
    - Protect and preserve the source of human health – Nature.
3. **Change the way we think together**: Raise awareness for the One Health approach and the urgency of its implementation through the power of stories. And try to challenge your individual core beliefs, practice thinking in systems, and seek the leverage points within the system you want to impact.
4. **Change the way we work together**: Work cross-sectionally. Being in a group that understands the importance of systemic change can help us motivate and realign our purpose and what we do.

Treatment Plan: Exploring the power of health-based advocacy

Why? Our case report makes it clear: The climate crisis is a medical emergency. A systemic, integrated approach led by system thinkers is desperately needed. Despite the need for immediate action, Switzerland is currently lagging behind when it comes to the implementation of the SDGs and is failing to meet the Paris Agreement goals.

The COVID-19 crisis has shown that health concerns can drive widespread, major changes in society. We are all concerned about our health as individuals and also about the health of our families and friends. We have learned that these immediate health concerns require us to protect the health of our communities. The origin of COVID-19 has shown us that we must also be concerned about animal health, which cannot be separated from the health of the environment or even of the entire planet. The holistic view of *One Health* offers a way to engage individuals and groups for sustainability, including climate mitigation and adaptation. The One Health perspective also encourages us to ask whether we, as individuals or as members of advocacy groups, are promoting healthy relationships in all aspects of our life and work.

How? By exploring the power of health-based advocacy: We aim to join forces and bring together the various stakeholders we identified in our One Health Map, in order to build up One Health Ambassadors for systemic change.

What? Through our **One Health Working Group** we aim to organise a series of facilitated dialogues that provide a safe space to explore the interconnectedness of health and climate in the context of a wide range of groups working for a sustainable future. With support from facilitators from Collaboratio Helvetica, we can explore health as an entry point to a broader concern for sustainability and regenerative future. We can also challenge ourselves to examine the health of the relationships that emerge from the work of our organizations.

Through the Swiss Manifesto for a Healthy Recovery we aim to bring public attention to the topic.

Who? Representatives and leaders of groups with a focus on any aspect of a sustainable, regenerative future. Dialogue participants who want to learn about the opportunities to leverage synergies among various groups and to engage health and climate concerns in the context of the issues that their groups focus on.

How can I support this Initiative?

We are uniting progressive individuals with diverse backgrounds, in order to connect the actions on climate and One Health in Switzerland. Be part of the solution by joining this unique opportunity for cross-sector collaboration!

- Become a system doctor & join our working group: Here!
- Become a One Health Ambassador and advocate for us, by engaging in a dialogue and sharing this reflection paper.
- Link your ecosystem to ours – Help us with networking.
- Financially support the Nova Helvetia initiative here (Additional Information "Nova Helvetia")
- Any ideas, reflections, questions? Write to: onehealth@collaboratio.ch

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Towards an Inclusive Future

Reflection paper of the Nova Helvetia working group on Inclusion & Gender

(SDGs 5 & 10)

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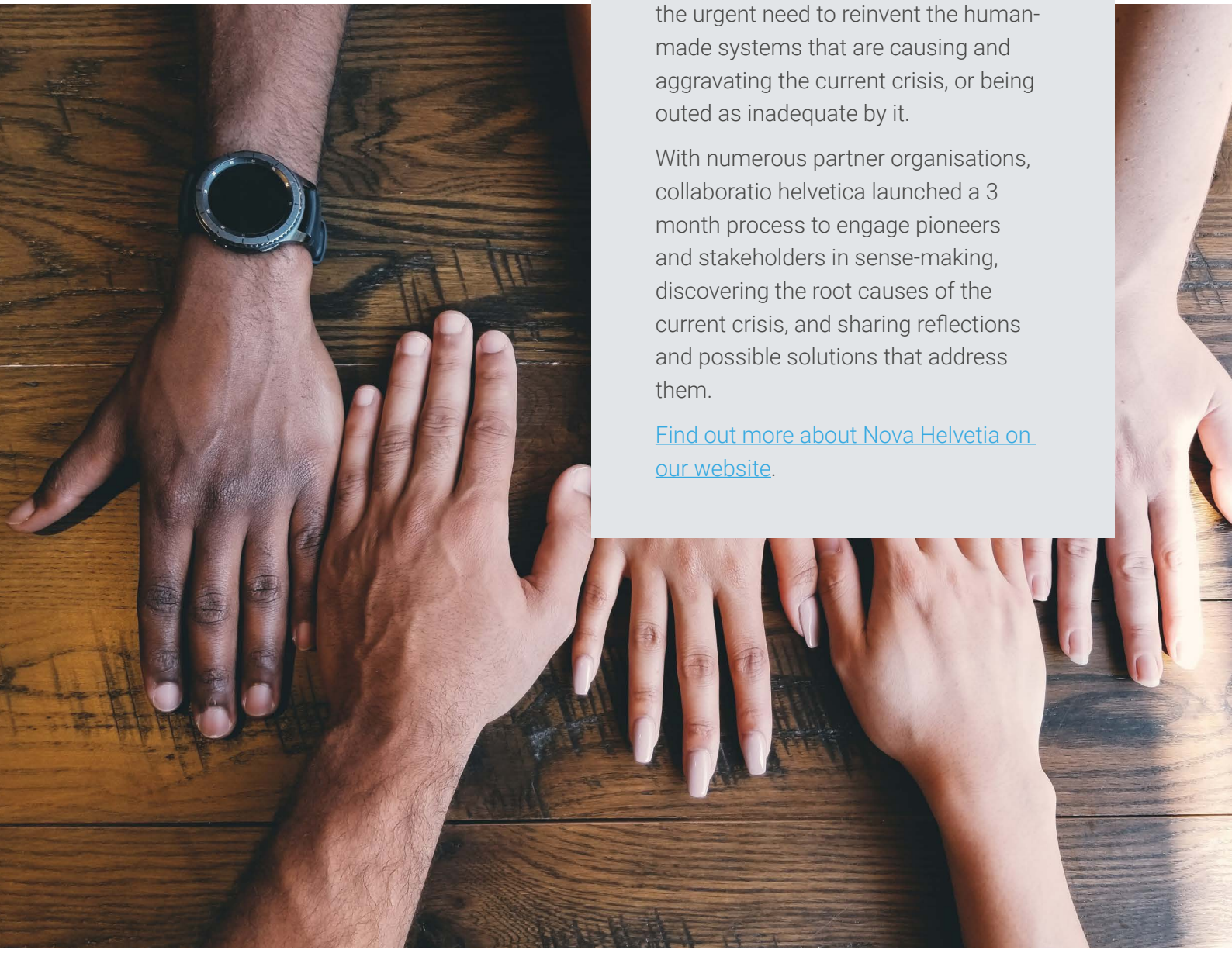

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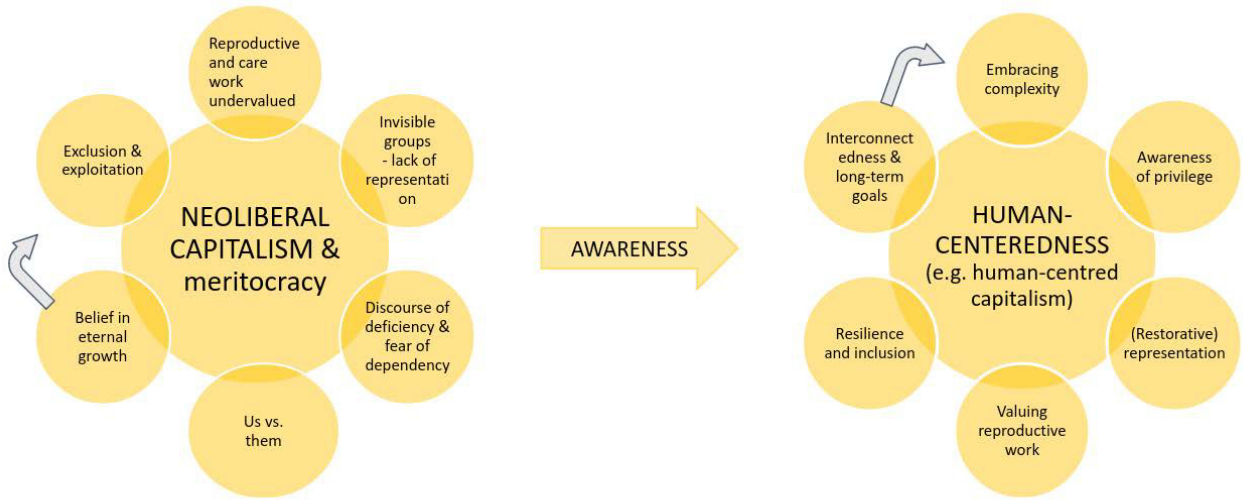
In a nutshell

We researched and reflected upon the effects that the COVID-19 crisis had on gender relations, with a particular focus on women*[1] and people belonging to marginalised groups. We focused on narratives around care work, the distribution of and value differential between productive and reproductive work, changes in the world of work, gender representation in the media and increased marginalisation of certain identities within the framework of our socio-economic system. We asked questions: *How is the COVID-19 crisis disproportionately affecting women* and people in precarious socio-economic situations? How might we ensure that there is equitable representation for ALL voices when approaching the process of (re)shaping our socio-economic future in the wake of COVID-19?*

The following image offers a summary of our key reflections based on collective research, personal interviews and regular dialogue sessions within the group.



1 We use the * in recognition of the many different dimensions - biological, cultural, social, societal - which make up the gender identity of each individual person. When we refer to "women*," we therefore include all humans who self-identify as women, whether by nature

Visible effects of COVID-19 on gender equality, inclusiveness and marginalised groups

The COVID-19 crisis affected Swiss populations differently depending on their socio-economic background, employment, health, migration or family status.

Even though a virus as such doesn't discriminate, we can see that the crisis caused by the pandemic magnified many pre-existing inequalities[2]. For example, the lockdown, the closing of schools and childcare structures and the organisation of home schooling and home-office have deepened gender inequalities in the household[3]. Women* are tendentially overburdened in 5 areas: domestic (cooking, shopping, cleaning), mental load (organisation), parental (childcare, homeschooling), professional (home office, face-to-face work) and emotional (psychological well-being of those around them, support, loneliness, violence)[4]. These phenomena have been all the more salient for single parents and immigrants without the security of residency papers or stable income[5]. In general, the situation was especially hard on parents of all genders, who were expected to perform a 100% workload in a home-office setting.

Furthermore, women* were also at the forefront of the battle against COVID-19, making up nearly 70% of the social- and health-care workforce, which exposed them to a greater risk of infection. At the same time, they were in less of a position to have control over their own risk-taking, as the decision-making processes and leadership positions in the sector continue to be mainly held by men*. The voice of women* is typically lacking in media in healthcare debates and thus not heard or taken into consideration in policy responses.[6]

Despite the many, undeniably negative consequences of the crisis, we also saw opportunities where we identified potential for change. For example:

- ***Workplace Flexibility:*** The boost in digitalisation that many companies introduced during the lockdown has increased acceptance of remote- and flex- working scenarios. For example, companies such as Facebook and Twitter have announced that they "are giving employees the opportunity to work from home permanently".[7] While many diversity and inclusion professionals agree that flex-work is an important factor in improving gender equality in both the workplace and caretaking roles, experts assume that a major shift towards home office after the lockdown is unlikely in Switzerland because of the prevailing corporate cultural barriers in many companies.[8]
- ***Gender Relations in Parenting***: Many parents enjoyed working from home "despite (...) the

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of their assigned sex, gender expression, or gender identity.

2 Gender Campus (2020). The corona crisis from a gender perspective: opening up a debate.Gender Campus website. Elzbieta Korolczuk (2020). Crisis is gendered. Women in the times of pandemic. Heinrich Böll Stiftung. Gunda Werner Institute. Feminism and Gender Democracy.

3 Sarah Bütikofer, Julie Craviolini, Michael Hermann, Daniel Krähenbühl (2020). Schweizer Familien in der Covid-19-Pandemie. Sotomo - Gesellschaft, politik & raum. Eidgenössisches Büro für die Gleichstellung von Frau und Mann EBG (Auftraggeber).

4 According to Camille Froidevaux-Metterie, in Marie-Pierre Genecand (2020). Le confinement a creusé les inégalités entre les hommes et les femmes. Le Temps.

5 Beobachtungsstelle.ch (2020). Migrant*innen drohen rechtliche Folgen aufgrund von Corona.

6 OECD 2020: Women at the core of the fight against COVID-19 crisis. OECD website. Anne Chemin (2020). L'effacement des femmes de savoir pendant la crise sanitaire. Conseil supérieur de l'audiovisuel (2020). La représentation des femmes dans les médias audiovisuels pendant l'épidémie de Covid-19. Site internet du CSA. David Doukhan, Cécile Méadel, Marlène Coulomb-Gully (2020). En période de coronavirus, la parole d'autorité dans l'info télé reste largement masculine. Institut national de l'Audiovisuel. La Revue des médias.

7 Harry Kretchmer (2020). COVID-19: Is this what the office of the future will look like? WEF Website

8 Pauline Turuban and Samuel Jaber (2020). Corona-Krise beflügelt Homeoffice nur vorübergehend. Swissinfo Website

distraction of having children around".[9] Past studies that have researched men* who take parental leave find that those men* tend to engage more in family care work even after their parental leave is over.[10] Thus we have reason to hope that additional time spent at home with the family might boost a more equal distribution of care work between genders.

- ***Questioning Consumerism:*** During the lockdown phase, consumer behaviour in Switzerland massively changed, with an overall decrease in spending.[11] People were questioning what they truly needed at the same time as realising that they could actually work less when they consumed less.[12] It would be interesting to analyse if this effect lasts after the lockdown is over, however early numbers indicate that private consumption in Switzerland has almost already reached the same level as before the lockdown began.[13]
- ***Spotlight on System Relevant Jobs***: System relevant jobs such as supermarket workers, caretakers, nurses, and cleaning staff and others typically dominated by women* have taken on new importance in the crisis response.[14] What remains to be seen is whether this visibility will translate into a higher valuation of those jobs and industries in the long term.
- ***Recognition of Female Leadership:*** Many of the most effective political leaders during the Corona-crisis have been women* (for e.g. the Prime Ministers of Finland and New Zealand and German Chancellor, Angela Merkel). This shows the upside of greater representation of women* in political leadership roles. We also see evidence of an emerging leadership paradigm based on resilience, courage, flexibility, listening, empathy, collaboration, caring and recognition of collective contribution.[15]

As we dove deeper into researching and observing the visible symptoms and effects the crisis had on Swiss society, we also identified certain key elements below the surface, which we believe continue to reinforce (gender) inequality.

Eternal growth and exploitation

Our current economic system, Neoliberal Capitalism[16], functions on the assumption of continuous growth with the aim of maximising profit. It upholds the idea that the "best talent" makes it to the top of the corporate career ladder (= Meritocracy[17]) thus deserving recognition through giant salaries. Meritocracy also assumes that individuals are solely responsible for their own success or failure, ignoring the effect of structural discrimination on free will and self-actualisation[18].

This myth of Meritocracy was visible during the crisis, in the discourse on the value of individuals, where the contribution of some were valued higher than those of others. For those caught up in a complex web of marginalised identities, for example unemployed migrants on social welfare, access to critical support mechanisms like cyber cafés facilitating job searches were completely cut off.

9 Keystone SDA (2020). Half of Swiss working from home – and enjoying it. Swissinfo Website
10 Emily Eaton and Carole Jackson (2020). Want to improve gender equality at work? Help men take parental leave. Mercer Website
11 Eva Schultz (2020). Veränderung der Ausgaben für verschiedene Konsumbereiche während der Corona-Krise in der Schweiz im Frühjahr 2020. Statista Website
12 John Humphrys (2020). After Lockdown: Carry On Being 'Consumers'? Yougov Website
13 Matthias Benz and Florian Seliger (2020). Die Wirtschaft läuft wieder zu 90 Prozent – das zeigen unkonventionelle Echtzeitdaten. NZZ Website
14 Regina Frey (2020). Corona und Gender - ein geschlechtsbezogener Blick auf die Pandemie und ihre (möglichen) Folgen. Universität Göttingen Website
15 Laura Hood (2020). Why women leaders are excelling during the coronavirus pandemic. The Conversation Website
16 International Development Economics Associates (2017). Neoliberal capitalism and its crisis. IDEA website.
17 Wikipedia. Meritocracy.
18 Sophie Hodel (2016). Wo Integration ausgehandelt wird. Denknetz website.

Although this made it even more difficult if not impossible, to meet the minimum requirements for support payments, the Swiss unemployment offices did not relax such requirements.[19] The opportunity for discourse on equitable solutions for long standing social issues, whether combating poverty through guaranteed basic income or calling for increased support for infrastructure in overcrowded asylum centres, was lost in deference to a speedy return to 'business as usual'.

We attribute many of these attitudes to the neoliberal rationalisation of humans and nature as resources to be exploited. Continuous growth and profit are only possible on the basis of this exploitation - of nature, women* and marginalised groups[20]. The tendency is to use these 'resources' to generate short-term profits which are not shared with those who were instrumental in their generation. The socio-economic and thus the power status of involved individuals determines the likelihood of getting a share of the profits.

Undervaluing reproductive work

Feminist analyses of the economy have elaborated on the concepts of care, care work and care economy in order to characterise the invisible or unspoken un(der)paid labour as a fundamental underlying condition for the success of a capitalist economy. We can thus draw distinctions between different types of work[21]. There is productive work, in other words goods and services that have monetary value, and reproductive work, such as giving birth, raising and educating children (thus providing the workforce necessary to do productive work), as well as caring for the elderly and the sick. Because the tasks associated with reproductive work do not generate visible profits, nor are they perceived as requiring any particular skills, they are not valued as 'real' work and are therefore paid poorly, if they are even paid at all.

In Switzerland, we see this manifested in the costs of child- and elderly- care, and the absence of paternity leave. The burden of this un(der)valued reproductive work falls overwhelmingly on women*, without whose labour the current economic system would not function.

Exclusion and underrepresentation

The definition of humans as a resource, together with the devaluation of care work results practically in the exclusion of certain groups from decision making processes and leadership. This all but removes the possibility for excluded groups to actively shape their work environment and living conditions. For example, during the pandemic, women* in general but more particularly the voices of nurses, teachers, sex workers and migrants have been missing in the national crisis unit, tasked with deciding how to implement Corona security measures.[22]

Generally, the research available and the 'experts' that we as a society turn to for guidance are themselves part of the dominant power groups - notably white, privileged, western thinkers, as evidenced in the makeup of our own CoHe Gender reflection group. We call for a radical shift towards better representation for all identities at all levels of society, as the pathway to creating more equitable social and economic systems.

Discourse of Deficiency and Fear of Dependency

19 Emma-Louise Steiner (May 2020), Die Sozial Schwächsten sind vor, während und nach Corona dieselben, Das Lamm Website.

20 Sarah Schilliger (2007). Festung mit Dienstboteneingang: Die aktuelle Migrationspolitik und ihre Auswirkungen.

21 Sabrina Schmitt, Gerd Mutz, Birgiz Erbe (2016). International Feminist Perspectives on Care Economy. Women's Academy Munich. Munich University of applied Sciences.. See also Nancy Fraser's work. Sarah Leonard & Nancy Fraser (2016). Capitalism's Crisis of Care. Dissent Magazine. Nancy Fraser (2016). Contradictions of capital and care. New Left Review.

22 Andrea Arežina (2020). Wer managt in Bern die Corona-Krise? Republik Website

Another core belief that shapes our system is that there is not enough for everyone. With this "pie" mindset, we perpetuate a cycle of competition which categorises worthy people as productive and intelligent in contrast with their unworthy - lazy or stupid - counterparts.

People who have not 'made it', for example people who are unemployed, are characterised as not trying hard enough, or lacking in competencies, education, skills or behaviours that meet "Swiss standards".[23] What results is the internalisation of the message that, as people outside the productive system, there's no place for them. Not surprisingly, internalisation of this belief over time is demoralising and only serves to push them further away from opportunity, disregarding both their wisdom and talents.[24]

By the very nature of their precarious situation these people, whose insights might help us to disrupt this cycle of marginalisation, namely of those who currently receive social welfare, or those who have fallen out of the system completely, facing the real dilemma of losing access to critical safety nets should they dare to critique 'the hand that feeds them'.

An environment praising individual success and valuing competition does not appreciate dependency. When dependency is seen as a weakness, then we categorically stereotype human connection as useless or only for people who are 'less than' others. This psychological protection mechanism is the start of a slippery slope leading to the eventual decision that the challenges faced by my neighbours are not my problem. This lack of compassion keeps us in an 'us vs them' framework instead of moving us towards a more inclusive society.

Towards a regenerative, inclusive and resilient economy

In order to improve equity, fairness and inclusion in our society as well as to be prepared for the challenges yet to come (for e.g. climate change, biodiversity loss, possible future pandemics, to name a few) we need a socio-economic system and social contract, that is not built on difference, hierarchy and deficiency but on the recognition of interconnectedness (humans and nature), inclusion of all (genders and groups of people), and a focus on long-term goals[25]. A resilient economy is the basis for a society that can not only survive major challenges, but also adapt and grow from them.

We argue that for that level of transformation to be sustainable, we need to reframe the whole paradigm, with the recognition that our current intellectual and cultural references exclude the experiences of many essential groups in our society. We call for those currently invisible and marginalized to be brought to the forefront, to be heard, seen and valued in the public sphere, in political debates, in decision making arenas, in academic research, and in the media.

How might we get there? The following are key elements and ideas we deem necessary to foster a more inclusive future.

Self and Collective Awareness

Self- and collective awareness are key to moving towards a more inclusive and resilient society. Concretely, this means questioning and challenging our own patterns of thought and belief and recognising their influence on the structures we take as given and 'normal' in our society. Through

23 Meral Kaya (2019). Rassismusbedingte Bildungsungleichheit. Rassismuskritisch lernen und lehren.
24 Carole Berthoud (2015). Dequalifizierung im Arbeitsmarkt.
25 Democratizing Work (2020): Work. Democratize, Decommodify, Remediate. Democratizing Work website.

awareness of these patterns, needs, resources, privileges, social statuses and desires, and aligning that awareness with our values and goals, we can generate the individual and collective action that is required to move into a desired reality.

Valuing reproductive work

In an equitable economic system all contributions are valued, especially care work, whether at home with children, supporting the elderly or in other system relevant jobs that are currently un(der)paid[26]. The focus shifts from short term profit to long-term sustainability and solutions that bring value to all members of society.

Avoiding tokenism through restorative representation

In order to build an inclusive economy and society, it is important to increase the representation of women* and marginalised voices in all arenas - business leadership, political office, social organisations, educational institutions and research among others. Yet, that alone is not enough. In our exploration, we found that even in very progressive, human-centred and eco-friendly communities who have been established as an alternative to our neoliberal way of life, we observe that political and care work are often not evenly distributed between genders[27]. Somehow, gender roles and fundamental, often subconscious beliefs of 'us vs. them' are incredibly difficult to overcome, even when dealt with awareness and best intentions.

In order to truly increase representation, rather than simply virtue signalling, or tokenising groups without offering true power, we call for restorative representation: Where a majority of voices in decision making processes and leadership come from groups who have been historically underrepresented.

Acknowledgement of Privilege and Embracing Complexity

To enable such a power shift, we must be aware of our privilege and recognise it as a gateway to opening spaces and networks for people who are currently not heard. Deeply influenced by the Black Lives Matter movement sweeping across the globe, we begin to understand that privilege is not something to be ashamed about, but rather reflected upon, understood and utilised in our roles as change makers. By acknowledging our own privilege, we acknowledge the damage we do, even with the best of intentions, when talking 'about' people instead of with them.

Throughout this process we were greatly influenced by personal interviews with women* personally facing many of the discriminatory dynamics we have documented here. We use that awareness as a reminder to always seek out and invite diverse voices into our personal and professional arenas, and most especially into spaces where decisions about our collective future are made.

To do so is to embrace the complexity of identities at the intersection of gender, race, age, background, class, family status and more. Designing economies and social systems with that complexity in mind, and with insights, influence and leadership directly sourced from the people involved and affected is the pathway to a truly inclusive and interconnected society.

26 Claire Legros (2020). Le souci de l'autre, un retour de l'éthique du "care". Le Monde.

27 Sabine Carl and Mike Korsonewski (2017). Für ein Bündnis von Care Revolution und Degrowth - Teil I.

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Appendixes

Toolbox

During our reflection and research we have come across many interesting projects, organisations and readings we would like to share with you.

Feminist literature and podcasts- Our suggestions

- Chimamanda Adichie Ngozi: We should all be feminists
- Sharon Blackie: If women rose rooted
- Bell Hooks, Feminism is for Everybody
- Glennon Doyle: Untamed
- Silvia Federici: Aufstand aus der Küche
- Bettina Haidinger Käthe Knittler: Feministische Ökonomie, Was ist es & Alternativen zum jetzigen ökonomistischen System
- Christine Rudolf, Doreen Heide & andere: Schneewittchen rechnet ab: Feministische Ökonomie für anderes Leben, Arbeiten & Produzieren
- Silvia Federici: Caliban und die Hexe; historische Abhandlung des Kapitalismus & Care Arbeit
- Mascha Madörin: Quer denken
- Ulrike Knobloch: Ökonomie des Versorgens
- Caroline Criado Perez: Invisible women
- Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak: Can the subaltern speak?
- Cinzia Arruzza, Tithi Bhattacharya, Nancy Fraser: Feminismus für die 99%. Ein Manifest.
- Christopher Weber-Fürst: The future is female. The art of new living
- Virginie Despentes: King Kong théorie
- Charlotte Bienaimé: Prendre soin, penser en féministes le monde d'après
- Victoire Tuaillon, Thomas Rozec: Dans le genre confiné.e.s
- Victoire Tuaillon: Le patrimoine, enjeu capital

Academic papers

- The Economy's Other Half: How Taking Gender Seriously Transforms Macroeconomics. Read more
- Sorge ins Zentrum einer Alternative zum Kapitalismus. Mehr
- Grundeinkommen und Care-Arbeit. Mehr
- Für ein Bündnis von Care Revolution und Degrowth – Teil I. Mehr
- Ohne geht es nicht: Radikalität, Kapitalismuskritik und ein feministischer Grundkonsens. Mehr
- Gemeinsam aus der Corona-Pandemie lernen – für solidarische und nachhaltige Lebensweisen streiten. Mehr
- Eine Chance am Ausgang der Corona-Krise? Für eine grundlegende Veränderung des

Gesundheitssystems streiten. Mehr

- Postwachstumsgesellschaft: Who cares? - eine feministische Perspektive. Mehr
- Netzwerk Care Revolution. Mehr
- Feministischer Zusammenschluss gegen den Corona-Lockdown: Corona-Krise oder Care-Notstand? Mehr
- When women *don't* speak. More
- Le genre du capital. Comment la famille reproduit les inégalités. Plus

Articles & Media

- Die Krise der Kleinen. Mehr
- MMT (modern monetary theory). More
- Hawaii has a has a 'feminist economic recovery plan.' More
- Die New York Times schrieb jüngst, unbezahlte Arbeit von Frauen sei 1,5 Trillionen Dollar wert (bei Mindestlohn). Wenn wir unter der Last der #Arbeit nicht zusammenbrechen wollen, brauchen wir eine andere #Zukunft. Aber wird die nach Corona wirklich kommen? Hier ein paar Statistiken dazu!
- Was bedeutet Corona für Randständige? | Unzipped Reportage. Mehr
- Gender in Krisen-Zeiten - was heisst das? Und was für Fragen stellen sich? Franziska Schutzbach im Gespräch. Mehr
- In den Köpfen vieler Menschen gibt es diese Koppelung von Expertise und Männlichkeit. Mehr
- Economic growth is an unnecessary evil, Jacinda Ardern is right to deprioritise it. More
- Women academics seem to be submitting fewer papers during coronavirus. 'Never seen anything like it,' says one editor. More
- #Corona-Krise = Krise für die #Gleichberechtigung? - Video
- «Frauen trifft die Krise berufsbedingt am härtesten» Mehr
- Frauen verlieren ihre Würde. Mehr
- The coronavirus backlash: how the pandemic is destroying women's rights. More
- Terra Cognita. Schweizer Zeitschrift zu Integration und Migration. Mehr
- Corona-Krise: Eine feministische Analyse und ein feministischer Aufbruch. Mehr

Organisations

- Frauen*Streik
- INES (Institut Neue Schweiz)
- Denknetz

NOVA HELVETIA

DIE NEUE SCHWEIZ
LA NOUVELLE SUISSE
LA NUOVA SVIZZERA
THE NEW SWITZERLAND

Is Education ready for the shift?

Reflection paper of the Nova Helvetia working group on Education

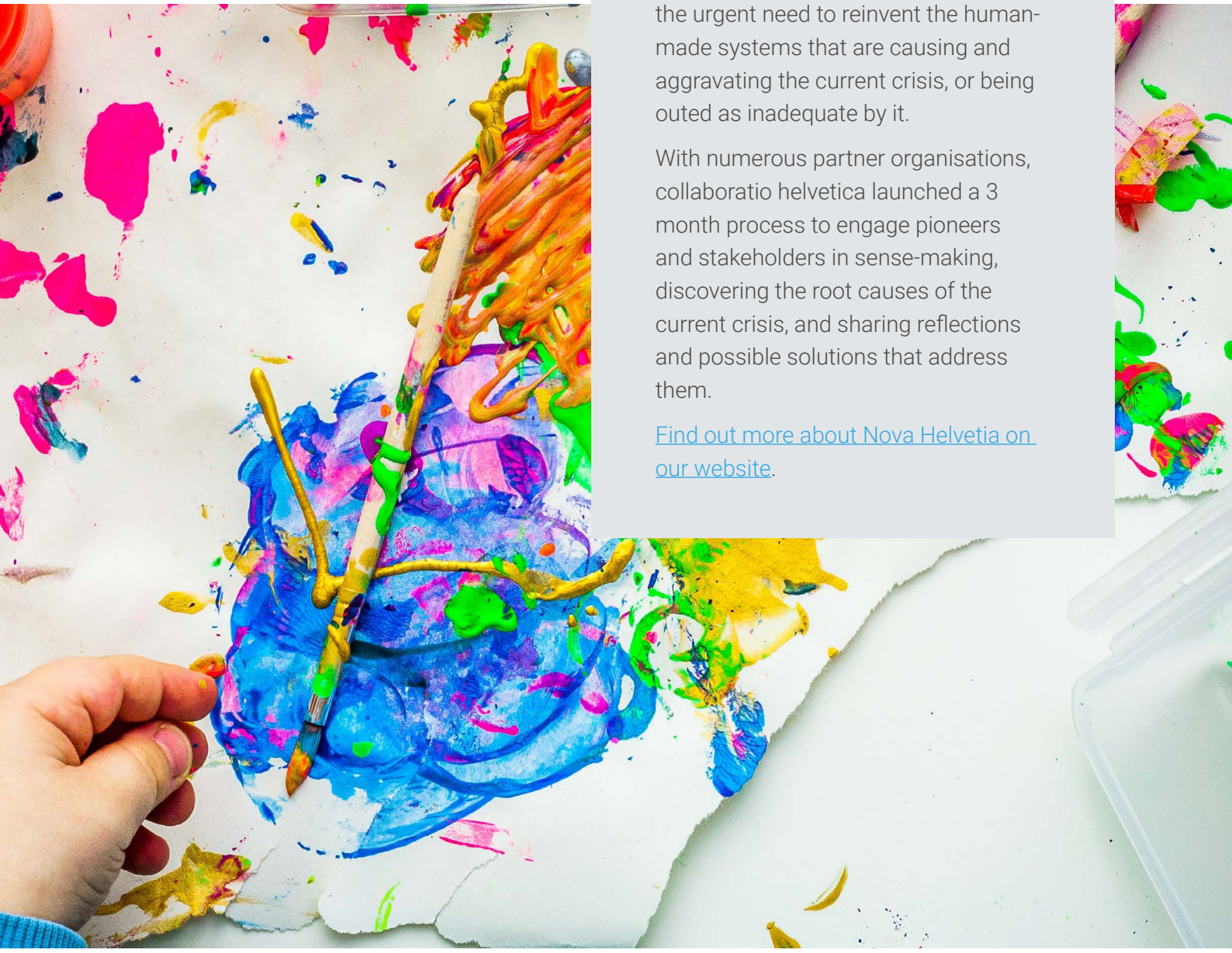
(SDG 4)

About Nova Helvetia

Nova Helvetia is a process to address the urgent need to reinvent the human-made systems that are causing and aggravating the current crisis, or being outed as inadequate by it.

With numerous partner organisations, collaboratio helvetica launched a 3 month process to engage pioneers and stakeholders in sense-making, discovering the root causes of the current crisis, and sharing reflections and possible solutions that address them.

Find out more about Nova Helvetia on our website.



This project is supported by Engagement Migros, a development fund of the Migros group.

ENGAGEMENT
A DEVELOPMENT FUND OF THE MIGROS GROUP

AN INITIATIVE BY
collaboratio HELVETICA

In a nutshell

Our education system is based on the principles of functional knowledge learning, underlined by timetables, instructions and the school clock, where productivity and performance are key elements. Personal development and natural growth are undervalued, both in a scholastic and in a corporate environment. Many economic sectors are in the midst of a huge transformation process and industrial processes are being completely automated. The question arises, as to how this system can be changed, to focus on future skills with tailored individual support? A new culture of self-organised learning is needed, to empower the current and future generations to resolve ecological, economic and social issues.

During crises, many initiatives or projects get a real boost, and provide an opportunity to define new paradigms.

Context and calling question

The special circumstances, caused by COVID-19 this spring 2020, have created challenges, with new issues for society, especially the education system. This has exposed limitations and also the flexibility and creativity of organisations and people in education. The responses depended very much on the infrastructure available in the respective school, how adaptable the teachers were and under which circumstances children and young people could implement unfamiliar homeschooling.

The varied reactions and solutions raise the following questions:

- What are the lessons learned from homeschooling?
- How can we make schools and learning more playful and individual?
- How can the successful examples of homeschooling be made visible, and the lessons learned be implemented in future?

Reflections and conclusions in Education

What effects were and are visible?

The current crisis made visible the differences in how schools were equipped for distance learning, and how the lessons were adapted to the needs of children and young people.

The infrastructure: Ranged from fully networked schools to schools without any useful infrastructure.

The teachers: Teachers who brought the printed documents to the children's homes and teachers who were free to organise the lessons without predetermined topics and project work.

The parents: From the viewpoint that they had to replace the teacher, to households without technology and equipment, to organised self-help groups, everything showed up.

The children and young people: Some used the time for independent learning and discovery and others who **were bored or spent time gaming.**

The system: Examinations and grading were completely absent. This relaxed learning environment facilitated the motivation of the young.

How does it feel consciously or unconsciously?

In general, the emotional interaction was intensive, and the well-being of the counterpart was a regular topic of conversation. There was increased interaction between parents, teachers and children. The mutual understanding for one other strengthened the relationships.

It was remarkable that children and adolescents worked more calmly and concentrated at home, as the stress factors of school were no longer experienced. Overall, the young people were more satisfied, especially those above 12.

The opinion of many, from this crisis, is that space is required for more self-initiative, and a hybrid combination of classroom and distance learning, to be established in schools.

The motivation to learn has increased by leaps and bounds, where free space has been created and fewer constraints have been exercised.

The key element is social contact, whether at home, outside or at school. On account of distance learning, many missed personal interaction with their fellow students and teachers at school.

Where does the will or need for change show itself?

The experience has shown that the system requires adaptation for future challenges. There is a need for change, and initiatives are required to demand new forms of playing, learning and school structures, so that society, especially the next generation, becomes more adaptable. Only this change can resolve the ecological, economic and social problems of current society.

At the core, the problem lies in a system which is focused on fulfilling demands of the industrial age, training young people to become functioning individuals and consumers.

This system is based on outward orientation, in fulfilling plans, examinations, time slots and egalitarian learning, where personal initiative and free creative thinking are not encouraged or even suppressed. As a result, future employees are trained to be leaders who deny or suppress their own needs.

Vision of the future learning

In the year 2030, people will bring together the core questions of their being, their origin and their visions and dreams on individualised playing fields to form their vocations. This will take place in communion with peaceful coexistence, with all living beings of this wonderful planet, which they protected from destruction as a young generation. The pandemic was a wake-up call from nature for a radical rethinking of humanity and the ability to exploit resources and dispose of waste without further impact on the earth and cosmos.

Conclusions and new questions that arise

From this crisis, many parents are of the opinion that more freedom for personal initiative as well as hybrid learning (classroom and distance) should be established by the school, giving room for personal initiative and motivation for better learning.

Many schools recognise that it is a return to a "new normality", the future of which is unknown. Relationships amongst teachers and with parents and children play a vital role.

Conclusions are to open learning spaces and let young people experience and learn to create, communicate, criticise and collaborate.

The communication between parents, teachers and authorities should focus more on the needs and challenges of the current time.

Arising question: “How can we activate systemic change to reach a new paradigm for self-guided learning?”

Various Initiatives emerged in our working group

We identified four examples with a direct link to members of the Nova Helvetia education group.

- **New culture of self-organised learning as a paradigm shift (system)** - How do we reach people who recognise the need to develop the structures of elementary schools and activate them to contribute to change? With ‘Schulwandel.ch’ Nils Landolt and Markus Roos have started an initiative to change education at the grassroots level. Through local networking, people interested in education can share their ideas and become active. For example, supporting or co-creating new spaces in cooperation with elementary schools, so that self-organised learning becomes possible. www.schulwandel.ch
- **"Facilitator of learning" (teacher) as central hub function** - What is the value and appreciation of these important people and how do we strengthen them so that they can support young people in self-organised learning. www.vikariart.ch
- **Networking as an opportunity for change** - How do we create a network of innovative forces in education? How do we find the right answers to questions on education issues? How do we support collaboration for sustainable education? (Swiss Education Forum www.bildungsforum-schweiz.ch)
- **Ability to change** - What is that? What does it take to strengthen it?
  Experiential space to change learning:
  - From the existing system into the new procedure. www.kosmos.schule
  - Areas completely outside of normal structures. www.toptotop.org

A prototype to address key challenges that we found

Project: “Schulwandel on tour” - 5 local events & 1 nationwide bootcamp to connect people

Project-Impact

We want to coalesce people to step into action. In our group, we had a central discussion about unifying people who are willing to contribute to systemic change. Especially in the creation of a "new normality" in schools to break up old structures and change approaches.

Importance

We want to engage people awakened through the crisis. Many people have recognised that systemic change begins with their mindset and own activities.

Planning

We organize ‘Schulwandel on tour’ and invite people to meet us. There, we present our initiative and other projects in the field. We want to concretise and validate a network of interested people in education and public schools. Five reunions in different areas in Switzerland to communicate the current situation and share their experiences. Picking up ideas and step into actions. (Newsletter: End July; tour, August to September 2020)

Finally, we invite all people with initiative for a nationwide Social innovation Lab by end of October 2020.

Healthy post-COVID-19 Switzerland

We see a time where many more citizens are made aware and to make this issue ripe for change. Let us put together positive energy in the field.

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NOVA HELVETIA

DIE NEUE SCHWEIZ
LA NOUVELLE SUISSE
LA NUOVA SVIZZERA
THE NEW SWITZERLAND

Transforming towards a democracy of the people

Reflection paper of the Nova Helvetia working group "Democracy in Transformation"

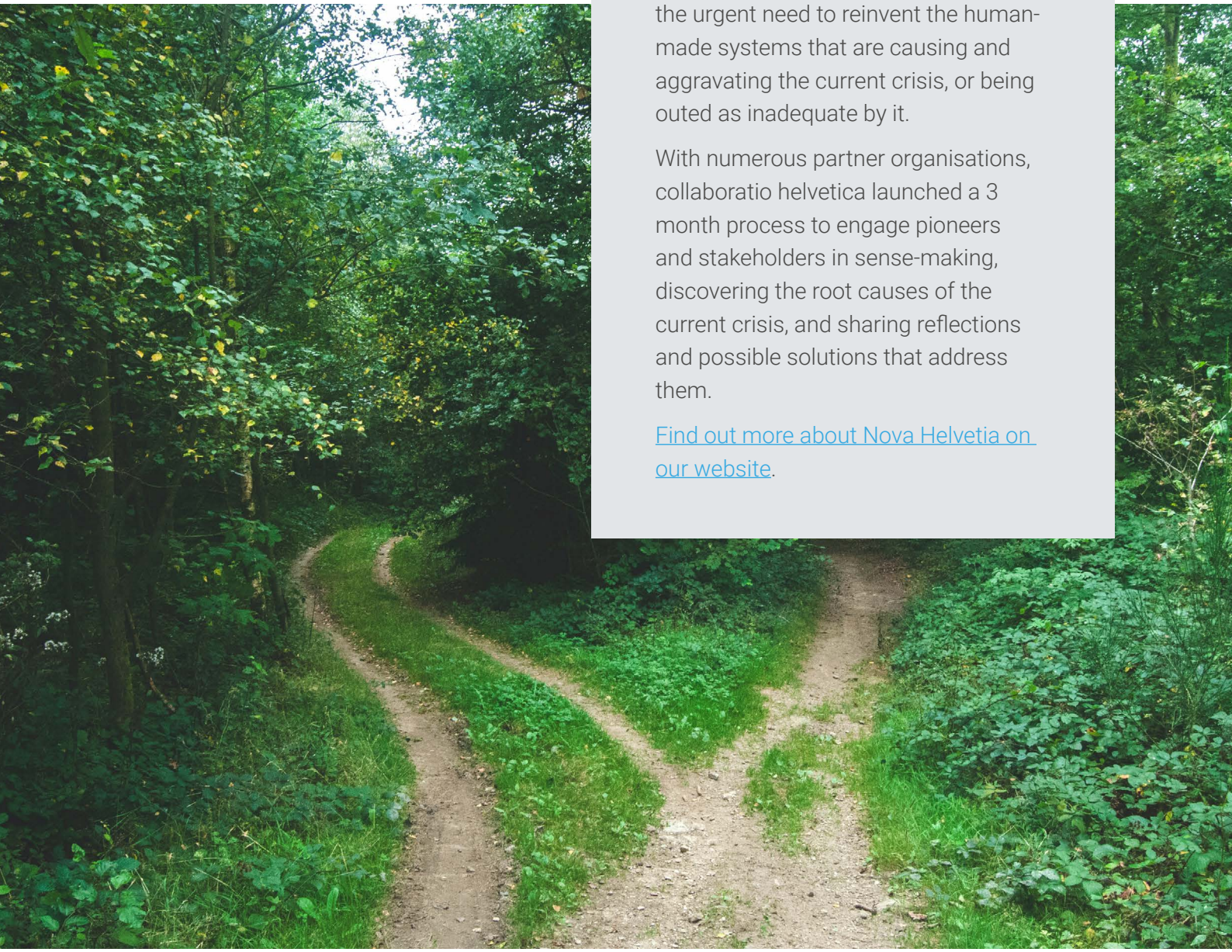
(SDG 16)

About Nova Helvetia

Nova Helvetia is a process to address the urgent need to reinvent the human-made systems that are causing and aggravating the current crisis, or being outed as inadequate by it.

With numerous partner organisations, collaboratio helvetica launched a 3 month process to engage pioneers and stakeholders in sense-making, discovering the root causes of the current crisis, and sharing reflections and possible solutions that address them.

Find out more about Nova Helvetia on our website.



This project is supported by Engagement Migros, a development fund of the Migros group.

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AN INITIATIVE BY
collaboratio HELVETICA

In a nutshell

Nova Helvetia created a safe space to explore core issues affecting emerging needs in our democracy, to identify and address places of disconnect between those who are in charge and the citizens, and to reflect beyond these boundaries.

We acknowledge that democracy in Switzerland is at a point, where it faces profound and complex problems, calling for solutions that require a closer interaction and exchange, bridging the gap between politicians and citizens.

In order to strengthen Swiss democracy, there is a need for interactive democratic mechanisms on various topics, enabling a sharing of knowledge, open discussions and collaboration, in developing prototypes of democratic processes.

Can involving citizens in the political process help solve complex problems?

The Nova Helvetia group, 'Democracy in Transformation', evaluated the potential for a change in politics, by reflecting on how the democratic process can be strengthened, by examining the hurdles in the current democratic system, and identifying the most pressing complex issues, such as the crises of climate and ecology. Furthermore, the group focussed on a more active role of citizens, in political discussions and in the voting process.

Our calling question in the Nova Helvetia journey reads as follows: How can the active involvement of citizens help in resolving todays' complex problems? We examined a potential solution with the establishment of citizen councils and assemblies, their impact and their limitations.

Reflections

What do we see?

Switzerland is one of the few places, where citizens have political instruments of referendums and initiatives, to shape key societal decisions. In the first two sessions, we identified core problems, such as an inefficient decision-making process, in solving complex problems such as the climate and ecological crises, resulting in a political backlog of unfinished work, and also as a result of a lack of parliamentary majority to tackle these important issues. We also recognised a disjoint in the democratic participatory process that excluded non-citizens, reducing the potential for a vibrant

and living democracy. The communication gap between citizens and politicians is substantiated in surveys and our own observations. This is manifested in very low turnouts at election polls that exhibit a particularly non-participatory democratic process, and with the exclusion of non-Swiss citizens, with the caveat that a few local communes provide for the participation of non-Swiss citizens, on a local level. The situation is exacerbated, by the increasing divide between political parties, leading to a standstill in societal reforms, some of which is attributable to the influence of lobby interests, preventing far-sighted and timely decisions.

During our deliberative process, we came to the core question in all the projects: Where is the disruptive or disconnected place in the overall chain of responsibility?

Root Causes

The problems, as a result of the weaknesses of the current political system, point to three levels, where different aspects appear to interact. This is not an exhaustive analysis, but its importance requires to be addressed. The practice of direct democracy, compared to other countries, is an achievement, though this group believes that improvements are possible.

Process: A backlog in reforms, as a result of difficult consensus building, caused by inadequate processes that prevent long-term solutions and an inability to co-opt citizens in developing out-of-the-box radical solutions.

Internal factors: Power struggles between and within parties, the influence of lobbyists, particular interests of politicians (biases and lack of focus on citizen interests) and undue influence of party whip and stakeholders with financial wherewithal.

External factors: Loss of public confidence in politics, low rate of citizen participation (citizens are unaware or do not grasp their (potential) influence in the political process), a non-transparent communication of political issues to citizens and an inadequate level of civic education in schools.

Processes

To ensure an even-handed analysis that went beyond our own passion and focus on citizen empowerment in the political process, we reflected on other prevalent political instruments or processes and their benefits and risks. Our evaluation of existing processes, involving both citizens and politicians, found these to be time consuming and inadequate, to address current complex problems such as the climate change crisis and inadequate social justice, amongst other issues.

Collection of citizen involvement processes in citizen assemblies:

- Democracy R&D: Helping make hard decisions and build public trust.
- Demoscan | Information citoyenne pour un vote éclairé
- Bürgergespräche
- Participative Consultation Framework
- Civic Tech projects in Switzerland and worldwide
- Participation.World – Involve Your People | Learn participative governance principles

What do we need?

In our journey, we concluded that there is a lack of an open communicative exchange between citizens and politicians, as a result of internal and external factors as mentioned earlier. These observations point to the need for a new interactive level between citizens and politicians, as a key factor to understand the needs and contexts of the counterpart. This is a prerequisite to find support within the Swiss community and to create policies that represent the needs and hopes of the citizens they represent.

New participatory forms that provide added value to both citizens and public authorities are required, to help us in our common search for long-term solutions to our complex challenges.

There are various participatory forms that could address this problem, such as citizen forums, citizen assemblies (CAs), online forums and sortition. It may be that these changes may not entirely resolve the problems, but they can provide a stepping stone to a better solution.

The participatory forms listed above have been tried out in various contexts such as the MLB process in Canada, Climate Citizen Assemblies in Ireland and France and Demoscan in Sion. It has been shown that such forms of citizen involvement offer the following:

- **Robust procedures:** CAs come with tested processes, to develop political decisions based on inclusion and in-depth (comprehensive) deliberation. The current political system does not provide these strong deliberative procedures.
- **Diversity:** Policy making requires more than just politicians sharing similar viewpoints. We need to interact and co-opt different interests in consensus, and include the interests of citizens who may not be actively involved.
- **Real neutrality:** The current political system is built on competition and lobbying for particular interests, CAs on the contrary are based on collaboration and aim for the common good.
- **Inclusion:** It is clear that the current system is not able to include those who do not trust, value or have the (voting) right to proactively participate in the decision-making process, and do not have access to interact with politicians from the entire political spectrum. This calls for new exchange (plat-)forms.

As there are many individuals and organisations focussed on improving the democratic process, we realised that there is a need to have an intensive exchange in Switzerland. This requires a common platform permitting sharing, enabling, exchanging and collaborating on projects strengthening democracy. We learned that the space provided by Nova Helvetia is essential to deepen the understanding of the underlying problem.

Vision of the future

It's 2030, and looking back on how ten years ago we dreamt of having an inclusive and real democracy, that is able to target global, regional and local challenges we were confronted with. And we did fulfil this dream! We put citizens at the heart of politics. Citizens are making and shaping politics, not big business or multinationals. We brought about a dialogue between citizens and politicians, in the heart of the democratic process, and we learned to hear and be empathic to the views of people with other opinions. We have grown together as one, one humanity that is able to go into deeper layers and decide to together unlearn unhealthy things for our society and the planet, and learn how to hear, listen and feel for and with each other.

Conclusions and new questions that arise

We know this is the time for change. It is now that we have to revitalise and energise the citizens in Switzerland and around the world, and show them a democratic path to be able to address the complex challenges we face today. Citizens do want to interact and act together, but they do not know how and where. Politicians do want to have clear and efficient solutions and represent the wishes of the people they believe they represent, but they start to feel that they might not really see the entire picture, they might not find a way in a traditional process as it exists now.

We just need catalysts, nodal points and electric jolts!

We realised that we still have to find a way to connect people and actors and not only have another project that saps our energy.

It is still challenging to find a way to engage people proactively in the discussion, to think outside of their own project, this is the bigger aim we have.

A prototype to address key challenges that we found

We believe that organisations active in this field must be aware of each other's activities, so that synergies can develop and real change in the political system becomes possible. In addition to the Executive, Legislative and Judiciary, we want to establish a fourth power, the Consultative, and thus strengthen the democratic system.

1. Need for a platform/ overview to see who does what, in what form and when in Switzerland, to better connect the different participative democracy movements. This platform will provide the synergy, where workshops can be arranged.
2. Prototype 1-day workshops to bring actors / the community together and work on one key issue/ project on that day (e.g. climate and ecological crises, migration, lobbyist in politics, etc.). The workshop, on the one hand, generates awareness about planned or ongoing projects and, on the other hand, strengthens the process itself by helping to identify specific inputs to different components of such processes: Communication, mobilisation, deliberation, sensitisation, over implementation and control. Our aim is to support each other and help create dynamic, responsive and synergised processes, to design solutions that mutually reinforce each other, with a common understanding, narrative and direction of the intended collaboration.

A first prototype is planned for early autumn 2020 focusing on how citizen assemblies can help to tackle the climate and ecological crisis.

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NOVA HELVETIA

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Funding the future

Reflection paper of the Nova Helvetia working group Funding systemic change and the Agenda 2030

(SDG 17)

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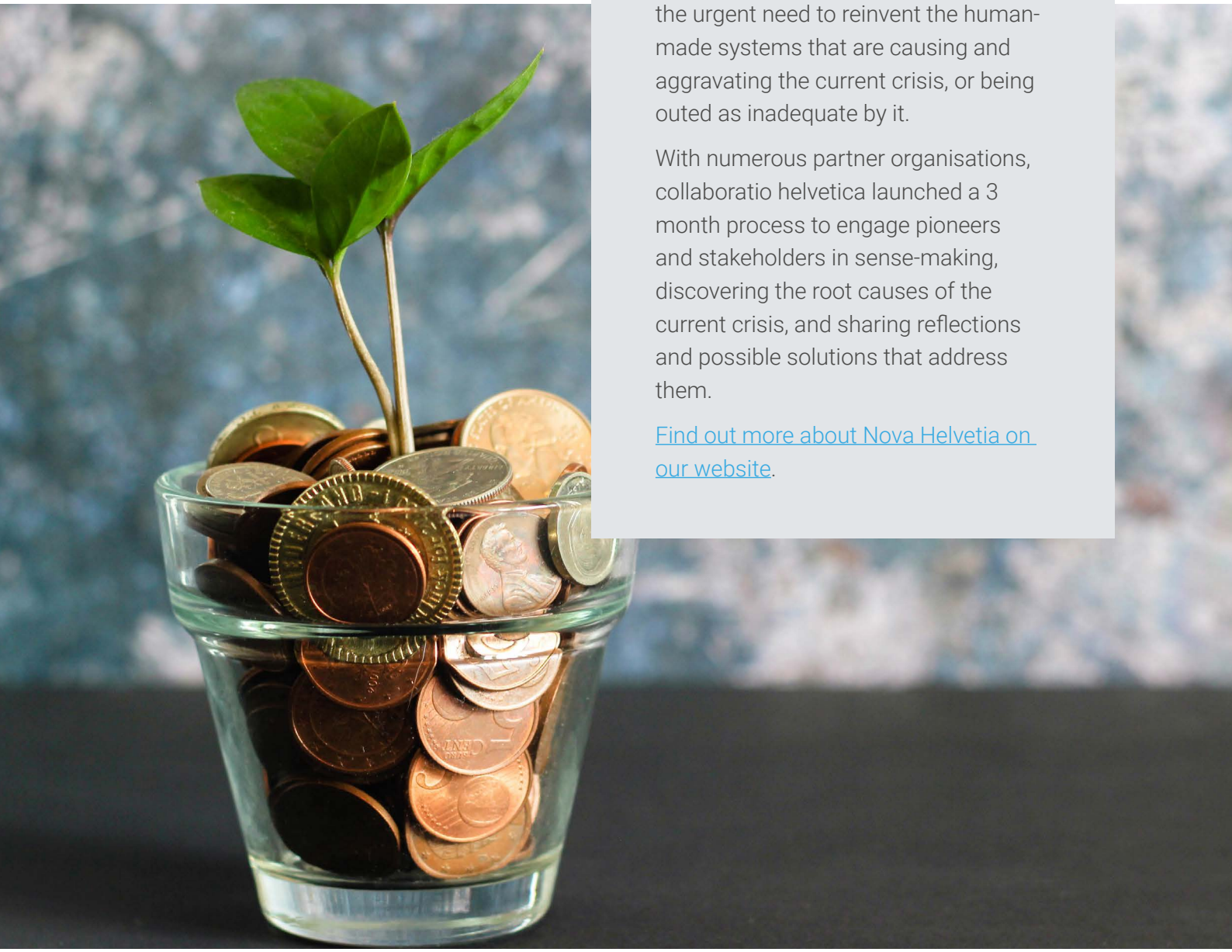

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In a nutshell

Many innovative projects, particularly those geared towards systemic change, are struggling to get funding in Switzerland. To find out why this is so, we explored the workings of the funding mechanism, on the basis of the iceberg model, with a focus on foundations. Based on our journey, we conclude that many foundations might become truer to their mission and more effective, if they moved from a practice of (linear) planning and monitoring, towards a flexible process geared towards systemic change. Among the prototypes that are being tested is a collaborative and peer-to-peer funding allocation mechanism within Nova Helvetia.

Allocating foundation money and the Sustainable Development Goals

In 2015, the international community, through the United Nations General Assembly, committed to "leave no one behind" by 2030. This *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* had been agreed upon based on the realisation that "Economies and institutions have in many respects failed to deliver. Not only do they make life worse for many people, but they have put all of us on course to destroy our planet. Our only hope is to change, dramatically."[1]

Five years later and, in the midst of a global pandemic, the 2015 promise has gone off-track. Although some areas have advanced, progress has been slow or even reversed on a number of goals, and global inequality is on the rise. Moreover, despite many countries taking action to protect the environment, our planet's health continues to deteriorate at an alarming rate[2]. It is no secret that we need systemic change urgently. Yet, the question arises as to how this change can be fostered?

In today's system, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are often tasked with doing the "good" work of caring for people and the planet. Where no single sector alone can move ahead, there are in-betweens, such as collaboratio helvetica, which bring people and organisations together.

Our quest was prompted by observing that the most innovative projects, particularly those geared towards systemic change, are struggling to get funded. We began by looking into the global financial system and its implications, and then decided to focus on foundations. Why? Because it is these

1 UN Sustainable Development Group (2020). Primer on the Sustainable Development Goals.
2 UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2019). SDG Progress Reports 2019: Are we on track to achieve the global goals?

institutions that finance - and sometimes also carry out - much needed work of non-state actors that go unfunded by 'the market'.

A first look at how foundations, in Switzerland and beyond, typically operate, provides some pointers. The competitive, application-based selection process, the narrow topical focus as well as the focus on planning and controlling in project management is not conducive to systemic change initiatives characterised by collaboration and experimentation.

So, we set out on a journey to better understand what was going on here and what an alternative may look like. Our question: *How might we activate funding streams for financing systemic change and the implementation of SDGs?*

Working through the Iceberg model[3]

As we were diving deeper into the context of funding systemic change, we realised that investing in probable but still uncertain futures and impact outcomes, was not only influenced by *how* we create and renew the relationship between funders / donors and social innovators (in regard to collaborating more effectively), but also by *which* underlying causes or mechanisms we were challenged by or even blocked to do so in a more regenerative (and less exhausting) way.

This is why we decided to explore our own context and to organise our reflections using the Iceberg model, also relating to our own personal experiences of fundraising as change makers:

1. Visible patterns and behaviours of Swiss foundations
2. Structures and processes (foremost informed by major funders of societal change initiatives)
3. Paradigms of thoughts, mindsets and beliefs including our own sentiments and experiences
4. Source

I. Visible patterns and behaviours

Over 13,000 not-for-profit foundations exist in Switzerland (2019). More than half of them (53.3%) are registered in the cantons of Zurich, Bern, Vaud, Geneva or Basel-City; and 51.8% have been founded after 2000.[4] Circa one third are active internationally, which outlines a trend towards global philanthropy that has progressed steadily in Switzerland.[5]

The main fields of foundation activity in Switzerland are health and social services, culture and recreation, as well as research and education.[6] More recently, the purpose of newly incorporated foundations seems to be shifting: 12.2% of those established in 2019 are related to environmental protection, and 5.3% are connected to politics and advocacy. This development reflects global trends of foundations recognizing the urgency of the climate challenge and engaging in the political arena.[7]

As there is no obligation to publish financial data in the country, numbers on actual funding streams in Switzerland are not available. Based on a survey by Swiss Foundations, the total assets owned

3 For an introduction to the iceberg model, have a look at the video "4. 90% Invisible: Deeper Layers of the Iceberg" by the Presencing Institute.

4 Beate Eckhardt, Prof. Dr. Dominique Jakob & Prof. Dr. Georg von Schnurbein (2019) Schweizer Stiftungsreport 2020. CEPS Forschung und Praxis – Band 21. p.5-8.

5 Benoît Merkt, Lenz & Staehelin (2020). Charitable organisations in Switzerland: overview.

6 European Commission (2015) EUFORI Study. European Foundations for Research and Innovation. Switzerland Country Report. p.7.

7 Beate Eckhardt, Prof. Dr. Dominique Jakob & Prof. Dr. Georg von Schnurbein (2019) Schweizer Stiftungsreport 2020. CEPS Forschung und Praxis – Band 21. p.9.

amounted to almost CHF 100 billion (2019)[8] and annual spending at around CHF 1.5 to 2 billion.[9]

Right now, there are concerns that the economic and societal consequences of COVID-19 might make funders become more more restrictive and controlling instead of open-minded and explorative in their attempts to support systemic change. COVID-19 is also an opportunity for foundations to gain or broaden their understanding of systemic change, thus creating space for a shift in practices that would make them a driving and empowering force for social innovators and systemic change initiatives.

II Structure and processes

Broadly speaking, there are three types of foundations:[10]

1. Small foundations (< CHF 5 million AUM) that are difficult to contact (mainly through face-to-face). Typically, these have not yet developed a clear mission and strategy but are a channel for the founder's capital, funding local, trusted projects. Many high-net-worth individuals (HNWI)[11] operate in a similar vein.
2. Medium-sized foundations which grew and became more formal, in developing a clearer vision and strategy. They fund multiple projects within that sphere; there is certain flexibility as to how the money is used as long as the project falls under the designated mission (e.g. Julius Bär Foundation).
3. Big formalised foundations (> CHF 50 million in capital, e.g. Mercator, Bill & Melinda Gates) have deeper strategic planning, a structured process, require proposals in greater detail and the extent of monitoring mechanisms increases proportionately to the funding sum.

When we looked at grant-making today from a changemaker's perspective, we noticed the following characteristics:

- **Narrow focus**. Foundations typically focus on a topic and/ or geographical area, as defined by the founder that is not amenable to change, even after the founder's demise. This may be useful in some contexts, yet it may lead to situations where foundations focus on obsolete issues, thus neglecting new priority areas or leading to excessive money flows into a single region.
- **Competitive**. Requests for proposals lead to organisations and projects competing against each other, rather than incentivising collaboration and knowledge transfer.
- **Written form**. Project selection is often based on written applications, introducing a bias towards the written word. This may end with the best application writer being selected, and not necessarily the most suitable project.
- **Results = Outputs**. The focus on specific outputs rather than on process or outcomes limits the innovation potential. It also makes it virtually impossible to fund systemic change initiatives, where solutions emerge through the process.

8 Idem, p. 28.
9 European Commission (2015) EUFORI Study. European Foundations for Research and Innovation. Switzerland Country Report.
10 This typology is based on informal conversations with sector specialists.
11 This term is used in wealth management to designate a person or family with liquid assets above a certain figure.

III Paradigms of thoughts, mindsets and beliefs

Our research, interviews, conversations and our own experience brought to light the following underlying paradigms of thoughts, mindsets and beliefs:

- **Competition as an organising principle**. The belief that competition will bring the best out of people and organisations, leading to a 'silver bullet' solution, and that collaboration will magically appear, somehow.
- **Founder ideal**. Leads to an aversion to funding an organisation or project twice or over time, making building true sustainability difficult. Furthermore, if a Swiss NGO develops a self-sustaining business model, it risks losing its tax-free status.
- **Affinity and similarity biases**. The limited diversity in many boards, who have the final say on funding allocation, may (unconsciously) favour certain groups of applicants over others.
- **Orange worldview**.[12] Linear thinking of cause and effect, absence of systemic thinking, stuck in "business as usual" and the belief that change can be thoroughly planned & controlled.
- **Fear of losing face**. Attempt to stay in control - hesitation to potentially tap into unpopular topics (transformation perceived as inconvenient).
- **Power dynamics**. Preventing honest feedback, dialogue and true partnership.

IV Source

Foundations are part of a broader financial and economic system. Many of the issues reflected in this paper spring from that system. On the one hand, foundations, and like-minded organisations such as NGOs, aim to fill the gap and cover what markets neglect. On the other hand, they generally follow the same financial principles and manifest many of its mechanisms.

Even if we intervene at this entry point and address the way foundations work and effect systemic change, the financial system at large still needs to be addressed. Now, if social and ecological value (externalities) were to be included in accounting and valuations, this could have considerable impact both on financial portfolios and performances of investments, and on the objectives and motivations of investors (all else remaining unchanged). This might then systematically change the role of foundations in helping to fill investment gaps related to social and environmental causes. Purpose-driven ways of operating a business might allow NGOs to transform their business models, both complying with the non-profit goal and working effectively towards measurable long-term goals.

The *Embracing Complexity* Report corroborates many of the points made above. In particular, it underlines that both funders (e.g. governments, foundations, impact investors) and social innovators are struggling to collaborate effectively, seemingly unable to pursue systemic change sustainably. This is mostly due to the complex nature of the issues contained in the SDGs.[13] For such funding to become more effective, new ways of allocating capital are needed, summarised in the following 5 principles:

1. Embrace a systems mindset
2. Support evolving paths to systems change
3. Work in true partnership with system change leaders

12 Per Frédéric Laloux. See Wikipedia: Reinventing Organizations : Vers des communautés de travail inspirées.

13 Also called "wicked problems" or "grand challenges", e.g. as they have no clear cause and effect relation.

4. Prepare for long-term engagement
5. Collaborate with other stakeholders[14]

Vision of the future: truly mission-aligned & catalytic Swiss foundations

It's 2030 and most, if not all, Swiss foundations have embraced a systems mindset. They have set the example to the rest of Switzerland and worldwide, supporting evolving paths to systems change. They are in for the long-term and work in true partnership with change leaders and stakeholders. There is light at the end of the tunnel as the promise of the SDGs is close to being fulfilled.

What now?

Above, we presented the insights that emerged from our process. As we have seen, the way foundations currently allocate funding in Switzerland is not aligned with practices that would foster systemic change. While the crisis induced by COVID19 has aggravated this issue in some cases, it has been used as an opportunity for change by others. For example, some foundations took away needed resources from work on root causes by moving capital to the fighting of symptoms of the pandemic. Others used the crisis to simplify application processes and provided funding for learnings.[15] However, for a notable change to happen, a shift in the paradigms of thought (and source) from which foundations operate is needed. Such a shift might for example be fostered by innovative foundations leading by example, enabling prototyping for proof of concept, and - why not - a Social Innovation Laboratory on funding systemic change. We would like to continue exploring in this direction.

This paper is only a first layer of observation and sense-making, looking into the complex world of capital deployment. The challenge is that whilst promising new economic and financial models are increasingly becoming available,[16] calls are also being made for more trade and economic growth as an answer to financing the realisation of the SDGs.[17] We believe that this represents a fundamental confusion of cause and effect and that under the current paradigm, more economic growth will lead to more environmental and social damage. Thus, we work towards a system that is fundamentally aligned with human dignity and the realities of the natural ecosystems we are an integral part of.

Below is a list of the questions that we did not address yet and that we deem worth exploring:

- What if our economy was fundamentally aligned with sustainability and ethical principles?
- What if short-term thinking would not be rewarded (transforming the externalities into internalities)? What if our financial system would focus on the wellbeing of the people and planet?
- What models of a financial system in a post-growth economy (i.e. decoupling growth from financial value) or others that are aligned with sustainability may be viable?

14 Ashoka, Schwab Foundation, Co-Impact, McKinsey et. al. (2020). Embracing Complexity Report: Towards a Shared Understanding of Funding Systemic Change.

15 For example, Mercator launched a call for projects under the title "learning from corona".

16 Such as Doughnut Economy by Kate Raworth, the Ecological Finance Theory by T*homas Lagoarde-Segot, Enrique Martinez;* or the Proposals for a Roadmap towards a Sustainable Financial System in Switzerland, published in 2016 by a coalition of actors under auspices of the FOEN

17 See for example: UN, Inter-agency Task Force on Financing for Development (2020). Financing for Sustainable Development Report 2020. New York: United Nations, 2020)

A selection of possible prototypes

Peer-to-peer collaborative funding allocation

Our first prototype will test a peer-to-peer allocation process. The intention is to even out the power hierarchy between those who have the funds and those who have proposals. The applicants will decide amongst themselves how the funding is allocated. As a gatekeeper, we foresee a primary selection process, based on a document that will also serve for communication. This checks whether projects fulfil the basic criteria. All applicants then receive an equal share of the funds on a digital platform, which they can distribute to the projects they like best. We will run several experiments with various parameters (e.g. are you allowed to give to your own project? Is there a minimum pledge required to receive funding? etc.) to test what works.

Thematic funding pots for collaborative action

Another prototype, part of the long-term vision of collaboratio helvetica, is to create "funding pots" for topics or SDGs. If the ecosystem is strong and trusted enough, grant givers may place their funds in service of a specific topic, upon which the cross-sectorial group that holds this topic decides what best to do with it in a collaborative process. This could be a scaling of an existing project, a joining of two ventures or a new project. The project leaders report and share learnings according to an agreed framework.

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Observations & Reflections toward regenerative cities and communities

Reflection paper of the Nova Helvetia working group "Sustainable Cities & Neighbourhoods"

(SDG 11)

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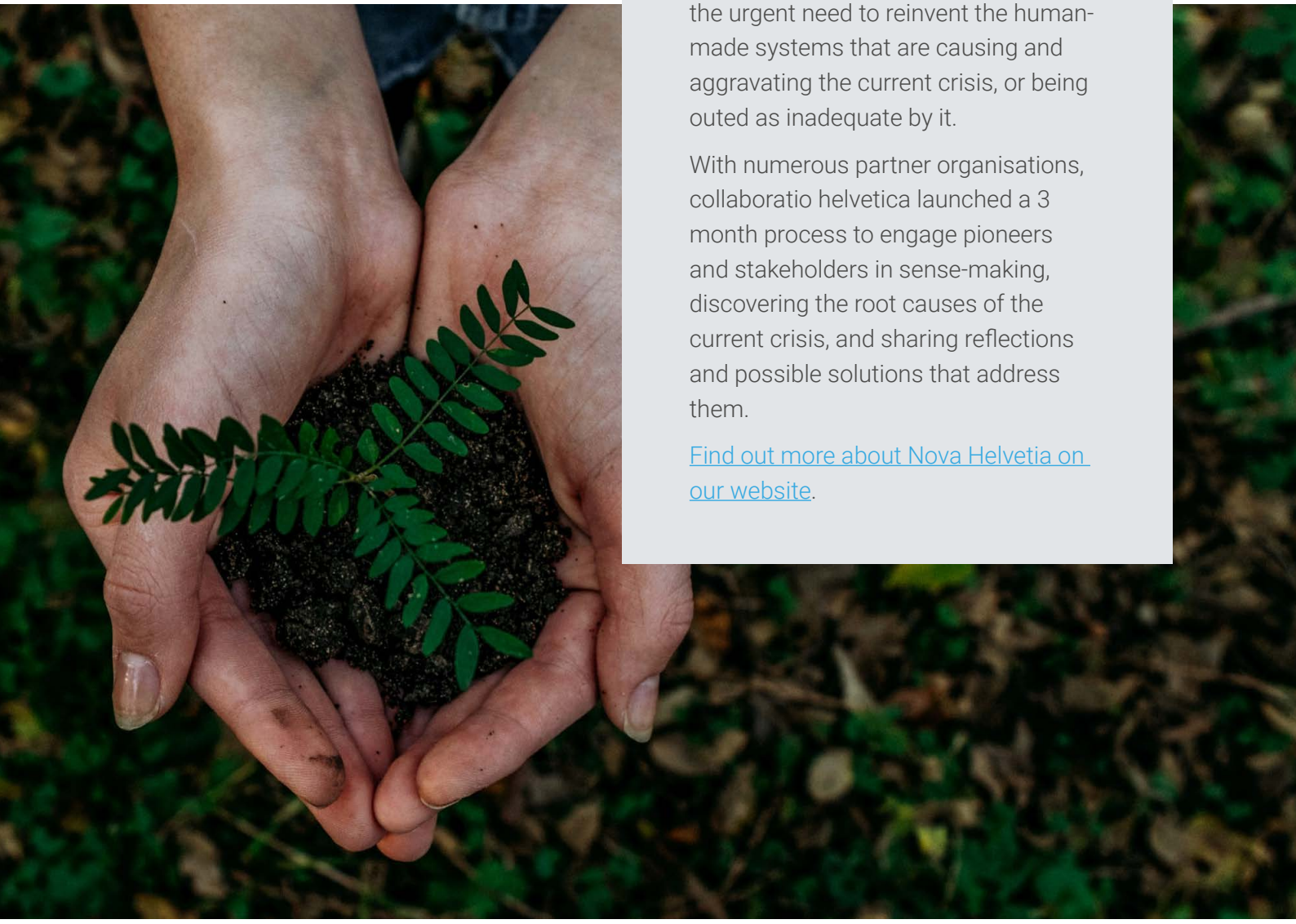

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In a nutshell

The Corona pandemic challenged our systems, revealed the complexity and dependencies in our cities, exposed our interconnection, which allowed most people to see how deeply we are entangled with each other. The disruptive processes and our creative or damaging responses during the last 5 months exposed our economic and financial models, social inequalities and the disregard for eco-systems, and showed that we are already in a transition due to long standing unsustainable practices.

Top-down guidance + policy, bottom-up responders, inclusive protests against invalidation have triggered widespread awareness of long standing systems fragility no longer fitting to mankind, to global ecosystems, or accountable to local peoples & places. Re-emerging within the fabric of urban life, woven of contributions and relatedness, we see once again families, neighbours and volunteers caring for each other, providing social support and regenerating the meaning of community. It was a beginning - but how do we catalyse and support this transformational work?

How and when do we make the time to come together, in order to find hidden potential and agency to create regenerative cities that are blending back into natural systems? How might we foster awareness in communities to co-create systemic solutions that resonate across the complex challenges of society, economy and ecology but are hidden by lifestyle and work priorities? Our small group for SDG 11 began the work by sensing and listening to people we met on the street, colleagues and a few unlikely allies to share their vision for a more sustainable future.

In long Zoom structured dialogue calls during the lockdown, our team began seeking the key questions that open possibliities for truly regenerative cities and neighbourhoods. By regenerative we mean to go beyond doing less bad and work to reduce, restore and reverse our negative impacts on local and planetary systems and to integrate our everyday practices. This way of practice allows us to sense that we already have enough, have what we need, and we can reduce energy and resource use that exploit and pollute the planet's systems. Inspired by the GAIA Journey guest speakers, structured by the Theory U dive into awareness, we aligned on the topics and set out on a sensing journey in Bern. We noticed already early in the slow down, that people took time to talk and were

ready to open up in conversations about their experiences, troubles, their community and collective responses.

The Inhale/Exhale GAIA structure allowed us to appreciate and integrate our response-abilities as people showed up to share their sensing and readiness to talk about traumas, feelings of confinement, and to envision more healthy urban spaces.

Seeing and sensing the neighborhood and communities via Zoom

During our first meetings held on Zoom, we related how the separation and removal from "norm" contexts effect us. We said that, we were feeling calm and privileged to have the time and safety to pay attention to how "The Pause" provided time and safe space for people and their families to notice and consider their core needs, priorities- and to care for close relationships. By mid-May, some of us saw that those who found their purpose fulfilled in their professional jobs were challenged to be purposefully occupied at home and wanted things to get back to normal. We noted then, that the media channels were busily pre-formulating the drivers for security and the way they handled the health, economic and social crisis. Homeschooling, remote working, child care shifts and cabin fever were taking their toll on emotional health, which raised the stress and seemed to contribute to the need to get back to the office jobs. By mid-June, people were happily driving off to work under significant residual stress and the promise of summer vacation replanned in Switzerland. Before the crisis, professional burnout or bore-out rates were circa 15% with the admin.bfs.ch reporting in excess of 55% of professionals stressed in their jobs and lifestyle expectations.

Talking with neighbours and chatting with colleagues at Impact Hub, Keith noticed that various workplaces experienced the shut-down very unevenly. The ICT-digital services and healthcare services accelerated, many administration kept working and construction workers did not live through a slowdown because much of their work conforms to physical distancing requirements or it is outdoors.

Reflecting back on the time up until the end of June, we saw that Swiss government's top-down administration had provided the security and basic social stability with Berset's clear communication and the simple rules for compliance. Together with primary service security, much of society felt provided for as if living in a benevolent container for communities. The time of the Pause, afforded culture-wide opportunities, listening and discussions about values, sustainable living and sufficiency with less freedom of lifestyle.

A few systemic insights

The Nova Helvetica Journey exposed and clarified the fragmented, often traumatised, fragile nature of institutions working on business models and labour practices of capitalism that failed to support people. In other lands, we saw long-standing structural and relational systemic violence and invalidating practices; for instance, in how students during middle school are socially and economically divided for career opportunities. We saw on the news systemic invalidating of groups of people; Black Lives Matter, Native people; how the aged and poor neighbourhoods' healthcare and social services failed to meet basic needs and collapsed in other countries. It seems that because we were all experiencing the same pandemic, for a time, there was global resonance against the unsustainable practices and bias built into the very fabric of all the cities around the world.

From Peter Senge's often cited examples, we can see that these systemic challenges must be

resolved by the people involved who are holding the current structures and relationships fixed, entangled and challenged. Together we may envision and develop ideal solutions for regenerative cities of 2030 and address the causes well with an open heart.

Models for the city of the future

"*Thus, the ability to engage in wise management of a whole system is the core capability that a post-extractive economy requires its members to develop if they are to live in stronger and more beautiful communities. One could say that this is why societies build economies in the first place, to organize and fuel their own evolutionary development. From a regenerative perspective, the wisdom needed must be rooted in a shift from seeing the world in terms of closed systems or even open systems, to seeing the world in terms of living systems*."
Carol Sanford ; The Regenerative Economic Shaper Perspective Paper_ Part 3/5, June 2020

A whole nature systems approach to engaging human purpose within nature is basic.

"In Ersilia, to establish the relationships that sustain the city's life, the inhabitants stretch strings from the corners of the houses, white or black or gray or black-and-white according to whether they mark a relationship of blood, of trade, authority, agency. When the strings become so numerous that you can no longer pass among them, the inhabitants leave: the houses are dismantled; only the strings and their supports remain. (...) Thus, when traveling in the territory of Ersilia, you come upon the ruins of abandoned cities, without the walls which do not last, without the bones of the dead which the wind rolls away: spiderwebs of intricate relationships seeking a form." (Italo Calvino: Invisible Cities, 1972)

For six decades after WW2, architects, city planners and government planning policy consider the city according to linear exploitative economic models, where socio-economic-financial structures and relationships cause or predispose behaviours of class, race and "type" that can be declared, managed and developed. We are seeing the results of this cynical pro-growth model of human success. That mindset and the constructed environment have created unlivable ghettos, elderly institutional living and systemic violence due to unfair practices and many unhealthy places worldwide.

In early June we opened an interviewing phase of our research with the guiding questions:

1. How might we individually, witnessing the unfolding of local and global events and exposing the relatedness to our experience, reimagine the patterns and rhythms of the city?
2. What potentials are now possible because the people understand that we share our cities with our relationships and interactions?
3. What events, containers and agency, can we provide that will enable and empower actors throughout their networks to see their effectiveness?

Voices present during the first week of June

Here we include, some excerpts and insights from the interviews.

Two young men pondering the conviviality of inner city public spaces their dependence on public funding for programs that enable a diverse mix of inhabitants to mingle: art and cultural events, sports programs, needle exchange points, cafes and occupied spaces, the liminal territory of empty buildings and unused places.

An enterprising immigrant shop owner connecting marginalised women's groups all over the world to the purchasing power of a wealthier class in a Swiss city, dreaming of transforming shops into places of learning about craft, time, skill and appreciation of beauty. A mobile food stall owner offers organic food made by hand on the spot, but served in single-use plastic to comply with public health safety standards.

Two young men from the Balkan, an artist and an actor, struggling to make a living and stay connected to the underground art scene. The common thread for envisioning a better future is in reinforcing collaboration and solidarity within their own circles, and the feeling of disempowerment when contrasted with wealthy owners of inner city real estate and by the regulations of a slow-moving municipality.

A woman who works at Inselspital asked a caregiver professional in Domicil Altersheim about how it has been for them working in this difficult Corona time with elderly people and she answered; *"Oh the old people always make trouble and stress in their families, they are just like that*." Are caregiver's absencing in cooperation with busy family members? Do the systemic frameworks still fragment and support trauma in relationships among the generations?

A university student observed: *Three police enter the grounds of the Reitschule. They were confronted by ten "lokals" who without any openness or question asked them to leave immediately.* Is the social contract between alt- culture and representing authority so confrontational that no dialogue is possible? Each assumes a position to stake out their right to and occupy "their city". "The city night belongs to us", said one student.

In an interview with Florian Steiner co-creator of the Berner Design Festival 2015, 2017, 2019 and next year 2021, we asked if the challenges experienced this year would affect how they approached sponsors, developed the festival together and worked to make an attractive event during a time of social stress about public events. His response seemed to deny that there would be lasting effects sponsoring or business relationships. He had worked throughout because service design and digitalization of business accelerated this year, regardless of the pandemic

For forty years, a 72 year, owner and instructor at a driving school has been giving lessons. He never considered not going back to work; with a mask, gloves and his smile. He accepted the government's intrusion into his business but the validation of daily meaningful work with people was clearly more important to him than the risks of infection.

A long time friend, a head of a laboratory and manager at Novartis Basel told us about how agilely the admins and managers had organised home/remote work schedules and team working relationships while creating more value and organisational effectiveness. The result is less wasted time, happier employees who can decide in teams what is required between remote and on-site workflows. My friend now works four days a week from home and appreciates the time savings.

"2020 has been a shit year for me so far, my mother will die soon and within 48 hours my successful tradeshow marketing and promotional events business became worthless." So said, a normally very positive entrepreneur and former neighbor on the street one day. He started pilates and scrambles to restart his marketing business.

Keith discussed with Noora Buser; Circular Economy lead at Impact Hub Bern, about directions they are interested in pursuing that build off of their successes with the #VersesVirus hackathon and follow-up incubators. We touched on several areas where Impact Hub could be a strong ally,

co-organiser and potential host for some events and co-development. Already booked on 25. September at Berner Generationshaus is the inspiring Tzegha Kibrom in dialogue with Daniel auf der Mauer on the topic of systemic racism and discrimination.

Two of our team Nikola and Katalin shared their seeings. Katalin spoke of; "The longing for the quietness, the slowing down, the clear skies and bird song, the suddenly thriving flora and fauna in the city. We dream of the inner city becoming an elaborate labyrinth for learning, including Tatiana's women crafting their products in small workshops, Florin and Simon's open spaces filled with programs and services for a diverse audience including drug users and art lovers, sport teams and music enthusiasts, Sabo and Enis's art studios and small local theatres, community gardens that grow food rather than exotic plants, collective kitchens and playgrounds for children and adults, interactive spaces for language learning, virtual art exhibitions and citizen science laboratories deciphering *"the delicate, transient lyrics of the lichen"* on rock faces of the Alps…."

Insights of the interveners;

As initiators, we found two phases helped focus our intention; "What is ours to do"? and Bill O'Brian's rethinking of Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle for leadership when he said, "The success of an intervention depends on the inner conditions of the intervener." And so we once again observed in ourselves old conditions, and found that our sensing and inquiry needed clearer intention and a gentle way for common open will for our co-creators to experience an opening of possibility. These three points seem to hold much in place in the change-makers' ways of working and fundamental when seeking connections, potential sponsors and partnerships with well-established stakeholders and more seasoned practitioners. It is one thing to see the challenges, take part in the journey, prepare the ground and another to open the circles with those who will do the inner and impactful work.

Our research and sensing revealed invalidation as a core issue, and a leverage point to enable transition.

In-validation is the ignoring or complete denial of the value of another person's life, experience or perspectives, of groups, class of people as well as all of natural systems, including those of other animals. It is made visible as denial, degradation or destructive practices. Culturally, the Western mainstream has alienated immigrants, those who are different; determining, classifying and devaluing their experience. People discriminate against people of different colour, of other sizes, other mindsets or beliefs, and the disabled. We maintain education systems that determine and reinforce social divides throughout the last 200 years. We see the inability of alternative culture to work with authority to find common ground and its failures, which are reflected as self fulfilling outcomes within social constructs. We witness the unpaid work of caregivers that makes up one-third of our economic prosperity, of unfair gender practices with hidden agendas, and that we have forgotten the integrity of natural systems.

Reflecting "how we do what we do"

As our learning journey merges with other Nova Helvetia groups and local peoples, we continue to listen and record like a peaceful journalist, without an agenda, taking in the views and sharing the sense-making gently while appreciating the context and people in their surroundings. We ask local people and organisations to hold "Conversations that Matter" so that we can learn together. We use

Theory U envisioning, system maps and diverse facilitation online tools like Mural, Kumu and Zoom to build relatedness and sense with people as well as our local expert hosts. We listen to the older and younger, in systemic and personal ways of sensing and sense-making of the inclusive fabric of regenerative cities.

Vertical prototyping and minimum viable system (MVS)

For social innovation projects, prototypes fulfil the same functions as in design and architecture; they mock-up a form and functional way of testing and verifying a simplified experience for typical users or citizens to interact with and discover possibilities. The Minimum Viable System (MVS) way of working, offered by top design firms and government design teams, allows very complex systems with many stakeholders to experiment at low risk and manageable costs complex and dynamic projects. The method also allows all needed stakeholders to have a bias for action way of learning way of participating, co-learning and improving the prototype that are tested iteratively and altered with no investment, to improve outcomes. Vertical Prototyping is specifically inclusive of all stakeholder levels and is a great way for partners, managers and citizens to engage in systemic transformation as they mock-up the simplest version of the social ecosystem and see what is needed to activate interest and engagement. The MVS/Vertical prototypes of partially aligned actors demonstrates to them the engagement of weaker and silent parts of the system are needed, builds commitment and helps build agency with admins. & actors who will co-create the next phase following the prototypes. For all involved actors, MVS prototyping and testing is the inclusive action based research that reduces risks and produces feedback reporting with low initial costs and commitment for agile and complex projects. To further reduce risks, increase cross learning but at higher costs, three parallel prototypes that engage two or more societal and organisational levels should be done with embedded practitioners and institutional hosting for holistic process and more successful implementation. It takes time and high level buy-in with resources commitment but the method allows mature organisations, governments, and agile change-makers to innovate together.

The summer pause for our group caused us to drift apart but perhaps we hope in co-visioning our first MockUps we can find new winds and common ground. As cities are extremely complex and dynamic systems in transition, we need to engage with allies at all levels and social-economic bubbles with curiosity, co-learning by doing. As we find accord and resonance with Nova Helvetia actors, learn to appreciate journalists who are professional listeners, and work with potential hosts, we will enter into a new phase as more confident facilitators. Under the working title of, “BE Social Learning Labs and Conversations that Matter” in cooperation with the following hosts, we suggest that Dialogues could lead up to hosted Communities of Practice (CoPs) spaces that would be the containers for the MVS/Vertical prototypes.

A list of topics with hosts

1. Generationshaus; Five Generations for OnehealthPlanet
2. Reitschule; Authority, Democracy, self-governance and social contracts
3. Impact Hub Bern; CE Transition- sustainable consumption to regenerative cities models for business 2030 Remote working, the city and neighborhood integration
4. Zentrum Paul Klee: Art that makes culture: Women leading transformation/gender equality.
5. SBB and BKW HR: personnel in crisis, how societal shifts and decentralised workplaces are

changing work and integrity of ones story while working.

6. Immigration center; “Why might we valorise instead of in-validate people who bring us their gifts from other lands?”
7. Effinger Co-working? Digital access is legally managed but immoral: Terms of Use and Privacy agreements are systemically dishonest, create dependencies and open vulnerable users to predatorial third party challenges. The legal contracts pull each smart device user into relationships with their smartphone that are “double bind agreements” with unknown agents, corporate data farming. With a ubiquitous sacrifice of honesty, trust in society suffers as the individual must sign or lose their usage, social status and technological outsourced advantages. Third party + ToU/Privacy agreements are a universal breaking of trust that influences our relatedness.

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Medium writer Jenny Andersen; Did Covid Prime Us for System Change? Yes it did!ProHelvetia; Passages;The Cultural Magazine of Pro Helvetia, No. 64 Issue 1/2015

Leanne Betasamosake Simpson: Land as pedagogy: Nishnaabeg intelligence and rebellious transformation Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society Vol. 3, No. 3, 2014, pp. 1-25

Mary Jane Logan McCallum & Adele Perry; Structures of Indifference: An Indigenous Life and Death in a Canadian City, 2019

Tessy Britton; How to build Minimum Viable Systems for community transition

FastCompany; 7 labor leaders on how COVID-19 has given the labor movement new urgency

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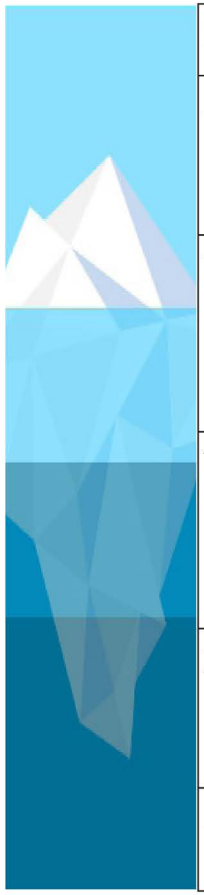
With many contributions by Nikola Buric and Katalin Hausel

Systemic challenged topics
SDG 11: City of Bern, Switzerland



Disconnect & invalidation of actors	*One Planet Health*	*Governance + Financial leadership*	*Four-Fold Economy SDG 11 &12*	*Race, Gender, minorities, alternative cultures vs. Authority & Admins*	*Food & Agri Systems*	*Edu + Sci research and knowledge flows*	Ownership + the Commons
Current state and actor disconnect behaviours	*Animal, forests, ecosystem distruction. Climate*	*Neo-liberalism traumas absensing responsibility Gov. admin +Banks + Insurance systems use society and economy as systemic playground.*	*energy, ITC, food, logistics water & waste systems are mostly government controled. Longterm planning +investment are resisting true sustainability*	*Normed unfair practices and relationships. Ignored differences produce systemic descrimination + internalised tensions by race + alt.*	*Large food and agri-system players over produce-use, poison soil for production-distribution, small systems have little way to provide integratity*	*Academics begin to take responsibility in politics and civil awareness but continue to use Gov. as partner, citizens as „other" resources and busiess partners as buyer in knowledge production*	*violating use of land ownership of water extraction beyond limits pollution without control policy against activism resources will be gone self stabilizing of natural systems sabatage.*
Structural disconnect	*Mankinds actions are linear ignoring life-cycles* *consumer actions have no relationship to environmental outcomes*	*Managed human and environment resources* *work, ownership and insurance and time management are contractual*	*Swiss + Bern systems admin's are conservative and ignore or deny response ability to future. changing models to Circular is taking >10 years.*	*Achievement bubbles Income and role ceilings invisible org. hierarchies politicalising vs. trusting*	*Business and economic models favor mass production and distrubution that do not include enviromental and transport cost to environment.*	*Education is structured and content provided for a long training for one career in professsions. But the workplace is shifting very quickly and few become scholars. Academics use non-academics for research in social sci.*	*Contractual agreements by multi-nationals with trade and extraction agreements including labor separate their responsibility to society, earthsafe practices and human futures.*
Alienation + Relationship	*Decoupling body health oursource to doctors and insurance responsibility for ones body. Physical fitness is a status activity in club instead of outdoors in nature*	*Quantitative efficency measuement of human and natureal systems are scientific metrics without connection to lived experience. resulting in people distrusting science and their own purpose.*	*Swisscom anti-trust KWO-Dam agenda EWB-BKW-Stadt BE cartel for waste management Employee citizen info. firewall divides*	*hidden passive barriers and social-econ. bias are for outsiders felt but there is no ability of insiders to see their heuristic bias. to jobs, education, achievement and community*	*Food system innovation happens from bottom up in Switzerland. Industrial food research was against nature for 40 years. But FOEN steering is pushing reforming for sustainable OnePlanet goals and learning systems*	*Pedegogy + science are still pegged to job professionalism + titles Using academic classical subjects + military training procedures to verify readiness creates unfit stiff structures in a time of rapid change needing innovation*	*The Corp. goals for Forbes 500, from facebook, Bayer, Glencore are about race to the bottom of extraction and steering users & market forces with command and control. Citizens society is divided and separate from nature.*
Source of system pain or imbalances	*Mind-Body-Earth divorced and not connected. Invalidation of life and lived experience. Displacement of human in nature relatedness*	*Old white men hierarchies in power rooms strategizing a future filled with unplanable risks especially when experts and forcasting denies info feedback and responsibility of mankind in nature*	*Extraction and pollution mindset is still embedded in the structures and operations.*	*defensiveness and readiness to fight & compete, in existential conflict to own, use and negate resources and people*	*Food system strategy continues to be forged by large corporations selling into naive markets Divide_Bern Uko continues community &self-organising startUp modeling*	*Left overs from Structuralist and Power = Knowledge dominate player mindset. Science and teachers are insecure and often project and protect their realms.*	*Social Darwinist competitive war game models for dominacy are no longer viable. Materialism was based on infinitie resources and dystopian scenarios for power elite.*
Relationships response - resonance		*share benevolant governance in flat hierarchies. Encourage self regulation & responsible solidarity*	*consider human dwellings and cities as metabolisms that only work well if balanced in earth systems*	*to see living beings and earth systems as valuable, relationally validating & valorising*	*RE-solve the two bubbles Stop the cynical extraction or „farming" of bottom up innovation.*	*We need a paradigm shift. It is happening from students and post docs.*	*Honor earth systems as demanded by the Covid shut down + live within planetary and human boundaries.*

NOVA HELVETIA

DIE NEUE SCHWEIZ
LA NOUVELLE SUISSE
LA NUOVA SVIZZERA
THE NEW SWITZERLAND

Storytelling for a regenerative culture

Reflection paper of the Nova Helvetia working group on Storytelling

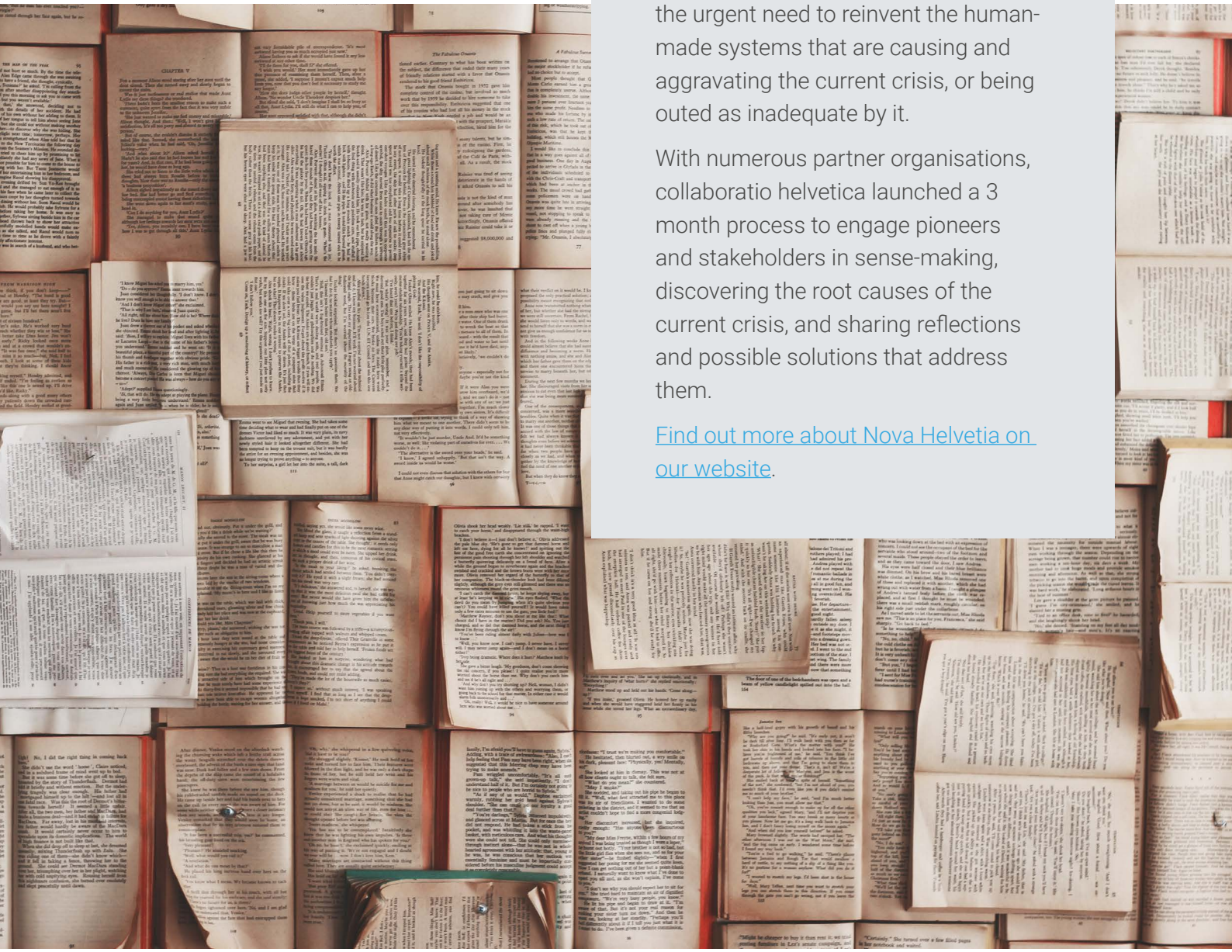
(SDG 17)

About Nova Helvetia

Nova Helvetia is a process to address the urgent need to reinvent the human-made systems that are causing and aggravating the current crisis, or being outed as inadequate by it.

With numerous partner organisations, collaboratio helvetica launched a 3 month process to engage pioneers and stakeholders in sense-making, discovering the root causes of the current crisis, and sharing reflections and possible solutions that address them.

Find out more about Nova Helvetia on our website.



This project is supported by Engagement Migros, a development fund of the Migros group.

ENGAGEMENT
A DEVELOPMENT FUND OF THE MIGROS GROUP

AN INITIATIVE BY
collaboratio HELVETICA

In a nutshell

The working group 'Storytelling for a regenerative future' explores a means to inspire each other, to engage and to activate the collective potential for a regenerative culture.

Stories build bridges that have the potential to overcome the root causes of disconnection from ourselves, each other and nature and help to reconnect for the benefits of all. We feel that reconnection has to start from a place of an open and curious heart, listening to people outside of our own bubble. By providing space for sharing, careful listening and harvesting the essence of underlying stories, we will eventually activate the collective potential for shifting towards a regenerative culture.

The importance of storytelling in the Nova Helvetia journey resulted from the experiences and reflections of the Swiss climate change movements during 2019. In Nova Helvetia, we embarked on our own 'U' journey and found that it mirrored the challenges we see on a larger scale in society, with regard to internal as well as external communication, the team capacity for sense-making and the alignment during our group's process. We used practices such as dialogue, journaling and systemic constellation in order to frame and refine our calling question and the focus of our group to crystallise our core insights and reflections.

Context and main question

The basic assumption is that our systems and societal structures are based on shared stories and paradigms – even though most of the time we are not aware of it1. For example: the way our political and economic institutions work is based on cultural and social agreements (such as the value of money, for e.g.). In this sense, in order for systemic change towards a more regenerative future to happen, the underlying stories must also shift – as well as the values that are transmitted through them made more explicit.

Storytelling was defined as one of the key issues in the Nova Helvetia journey. The impulse for a working group on Storytelling (for a regenerative culture) came from a conversation about how to

1 See for example: Yuval Noah Harai (2018). Sapiens - A Brief History of Humankind.

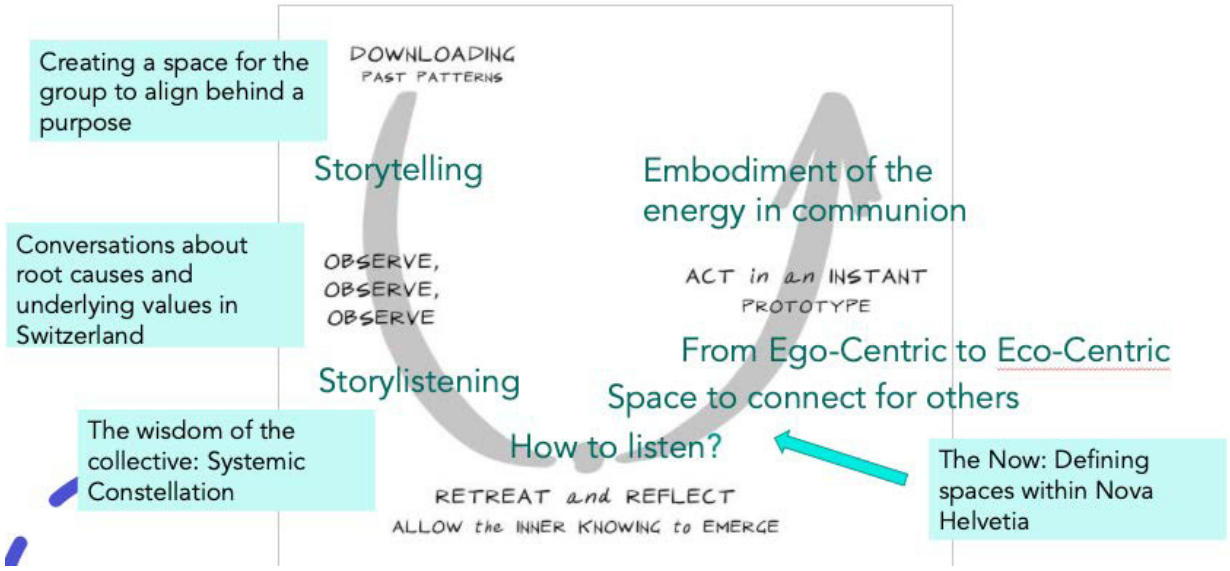
effectively communicate the need for systemic changes in society, in order to move towards a more sustainable, just and humane togetherness in the near future. The urgency of the topic comes from Swiss (and global) climate change movements, which, after a year of intense work with direct action on the streets and a lot of communication initiatives, came to the conclusion that a change in the approach of actions and a focus shift in a different direction and level are needed. The movement is looking for a new narrative that would talk about climate change in a different way. It yearns for a shift towards true but positive storytelling within an overall approach towards reconnection and not based on the old 'Us against the Others' narrative of separation. The network of Swiss climate change movements initiated the working group 'Positive Storytelling for Climate', which inspired the formation of this working group 'Positive Storytelling for a Regenerative Culture' within the Nova Helvetia journey with people involved in different sectors.

Calling question

The group has been refining the question as a focus of its exploration. This is the final version: **What makes our hearts sing - How can we inspire each other to engage with our future and to activate the collective potential?**

Based on this question, we intend to find ways to tell a story about transition to a more regenerative future, in a way that is engaging and can resonate with the wider public.

Reflections along the "U"



1. Phase: Co-Initiating – Storytelling

The group embarked on a journey of dialogues, in order to find and frame the calling question. In this phase the group got input from the CCS (Coordination Climate Suisse) Working Group Positive Storytelling for Climate, which was founded in April 2020 at a national exchange meeting of Swiss climate change movements. This group is supported by international storytelling experts from the Gaia Storytelling Lab of the European Institute for Governance in Berlin, especially its head, Prof. David Boje.[2]

2 True Storytelling blog by David Boje: https://truestorytelling.blog

We reflected on questions such as:

- What narratives do we need now? What narratives are people still stuck with?
- What do we have to change, let go, frame differently?
- How can we live and embody these stories?
- How can we balance our energy as so many opportunities, ideas, projects arise?

In our dialogues around storytelling we looked at it as a method of systemic thinking, interconnection and explored dependency patterns. The notion of 'listening first' arose, as we sensed that individual stories contained grains of the underlying systemic truth, that can be used to build common ground narratives. We were searching for a down to earth theory-free idea of systems thinking and were prompted to the teachings of Thich Nhat Hanh.[3]

How can we as individuals and as a group express our essence and share a coherent and aligned message beyond individual group differences? How can we inspire people to engage with a larger vision? As part of the current paradigm we are living in, our societies are strongly rooted in competition, fear and the importance of status. We came to the conclusion that we would have to develop the capacity to face pain and fear in a different way, in order to allow for a larger narrative and a shift in values to manifest themselves.

2. Phase: Observing – Story Listening

Emerging topic: To listen to each other with openness and humbleness: What's already there instead of what is the story we want to share.

- What stories are already in the space?
- What are the stories that we as individuals are holding at the moment?
- What is the story I am living?
- What do I think about the current situation and what is needed?

With the death of George Floyd and the social uprising around 'Black lives matter' in the US and in other countries, the group started a dialogue about root causes and blind spots:

- How do we address root causes of the societal challenges we are seeing, instead of just fighting the symptoms?
- We should know what they are, see them, acknowledge them, in order to create healthy solutions.
- What is emerging out of this acknowledgment? As a group we became aware of levels of collective trauma, grief and of systemic complexity.
- We are all products of conditioning. Where do we ourselves behave in a way that is racist or excluding others? What are our own and collective blind spots of white supremacy?

In order to move beyond the calling question to possible outcomes and prototypes, we explored the Swiss context of storytelling: What is the usual narrative in Switzerland in a (global) crisis?

What would a new story be like? One, that is not based on the '/we and the Others' - Othering-narrative? We felt that we needed to look at the unconscious root cause and structures inside of ourselves first before talking about the interconnectedness of it all. The idea of separation is deeply

3 Thich Nhat Hanh: Liebesbrief an die Erde

rooted in ourselves as individuals, as a culture, and as a nation. What is our inner story of fear, loss and separation?

The new stories we want to tell should be touching, emotional – from happy, hopeful to sad to fearful, but true, so that people feel understood and can connect to the underlying vision on a deeper level. We dared to ask why so many people in Switzerland live in a state of chronic anxiety. We argued that success, justice, safety, boundaries and freedom are core Swiss beliefs. We then found that exploring these beliefs, to open a dialogue about their current framing and meaning might help. We came to the conclusion that currently many of those beliefs are being collectively interpreted in a way that contributes to making us ill (success, justice, safety) and contribute actively to the destruction of all forms of life, especially our habitat, nature.

3. Phase: Sensing – How to listen

The group experienced its very own 'stuck at this point', feeling overwhelmed by all the questions, the complexity of the topic, differing focuses and a vague sense of not being fully aligned behind the calling question. We stayed with the calling question and focused on story listening and harvesting as the first step towards a possible outcome. We felt, we should talk with people outside of our own bubble about:

- Values and beliefs
- Disconnection / reconnection
- Why do we fear/ resist change?

We recognized that we need to frame our questions in a way that encourages people to open up and share, going to a deeper level of speaking about fears, needs, values, hopes and dreams.

We felt we need to be able to listen without judgement, being open to other realities, to mindsets and values that have served people over time.

Having a closer look at the root causes of many of the symptoms we see at the surface, we sense the overall disconnection (from self, others and nature[4]) to be the root cause of everything we see on the surface. In order to create conditions for reconnection, we need to reframe certain values.

Our ideas of possible outcomes shifted to:

- Harvesting stories
- Hosting a dialogue on values and beliefs
- Designing an innovative campaign to reach people outside of our bubble
- Working with systemic constellation

With regard to the purpose of the group and next steps to take we decided to work with Systemic Constellation as a method. This allowed the group to find access to the collective intelligence in the field without the limitations of cognitive perception.
Systemic Constellation allowed the group to recognize the importance of qualities such as connectedness and being in actual relationships with each other. This shed a new light on the purpose of the group: Whereas the focus had been to gather stories and re-engineer a narrative, the purpose shifted towards enabling the groups within Nova Helvetia to tell stories to each other by creating formats of communion that allow togetherness. This communion would allow our members

4 As described by Otto Scharmer in Theory U, see for example "The Essentials of Theory U".

to deepen a sense of belonging and safety, and to engage with storytelling from a regenerative place. We felt that enjoying this 'yin' quality is key to deal with the present complexity.

4. Phase: Crystallising – Providing Spaces to connect to each other

This is the phase of our 'U' journey where we find ourselves in, at the present moment. We are about to crystallise our next steps and define a prototype we want to test and implement, while at the same time manifesting the 'yin' energy needed for communion and reconnection in order to strengthen our own regenerative circle and open up safe spaces for story listening and harvesting.

Where we are at present, mid-July 2020:

- We came to the conclusion that being in a community is quite fundamental for a regenerative life. How can we offer a space to all the Nova Helvetia working groups that helps us to connect and brings us together on a deeper level and expose the underlying beliefs across sectors, topics and regions?
- We want to offer many paths, so that people of all ages can explore and be drawn towards a different and enlivening narrative.
- Many layers of narratives and paths are needed to connect to different contexts and to make new narratives as co-created and accessible as possible.
- The focus of our further action as a group is on practising embodiment of the new narrative, in order to be able to live and act from this place together.
- Living in and becoming the story allows us to communicate from this energy plane with openness, empathy and curiosity.
- A potential prototype could be to host and offer spaces that encourage connection and alignment. It's all about storytelling, reshaping and reframing them to enable us as humans to reconnect to ourselves, to each other and to nature. We want to facilitate reconnection and alignment.

5. Phase: Prototyping – Embodying the energy in communion

Even though clear prototypes, projects and plans have not yet been discussed or are visible, we know that we need a safe space to manifest the energy plane we need for this storytelling initiative to succeed. Also, throughout our journey various concrete formats of outcomes bubbled up to the surface:

- Hosting a dialogue event with story sharing
- Making a radio broadcast or recording a song
- A more scientific look at underlying cognitive issues that make a story appealing

Where we go from here:

- **Crystallising:** In the process of further crystallisation of new ideas, we want to create space for dialogue around storytelling and common values.
- **Prototyping:**
    - Further ideas and visions for story-sharing and story-listening projects
    - Initiatives that foster reconnection

- Explore whether there is anything that we as a working group can offer as an initiative across topics for all Nova Helvetia working groups.

Vision of the future: An ante-narrative of change

"It is 2040, the year the last nuclear power plant is going to be shut down for good. Climate change is still happening and posing a high risk to the survival of humankind on earth. Yet, the global CO2-levels have finally started to decrease significantly for the first time. Within the last 20 years we as human beings on earth have experienced the most fundamental transition humankind has ever embarked on in their entire history. How we live and work together, has changed completely towards global justice and equality, moderation and connectedness.

Humankind has realised, that the root causes of disconnection from ourselves and each other as well as the alienation from nature had over centuries caused a toxic, destructive development of global social injustice, exploitation of people, animals and natural resources, murder and devastation such as wars, slavery, racism and segregation leading to systemic trauma and grief passed on from generation to generation.

The natural resources of the planet have been exploited, climate change was killing people or driving them from their homes. Many millions had become climate change refugees. In 2020 a global health crisis, known as the COVID-19 pandemic, later called the Great Realisation by most, put life as we knew it on hold for many months and made humankind realise how dangerously close they had come to their own destruction. Based on this realisation, over the following five years a huge shift in values and attitudes had led to the unseating of most conservative governments, the implementation of sociocratic structures and a total stop of the use of fossil fuels, to name but a few of the fundamental shifts. The development of new power storage and transmission technologies as well as a global basic income scheme – reducing working time and spending – had dramatically brought down the consumption of energy, especially in high income areas of the world. With the focus shifting from globalisation back to regional socio-economic networks, the pandemics raging in the world from 2019 to 2028 could be contained.

The transition almost came to a violent halt in late 2029, when security forces of the old political system tried to overthrow the combined climate, transition and spiritual forces on earth. At the brink of a global civil war, elders, political, religious and spiritual leaders worldwide joined ranks in order to lead the mostly peaceful transformation as the World Council of Change.

In 2032, the rights of all living beings to be recognised and treated as sacred were written in the Global Charta for the Protection of Life on Earth.

Even though the level of spending, financial wealth and the overall sense of security decreased temporarily, predominantly in the developed world, the overall quality of life improved as people transitioned into a different, meaningful, more connected way of living together. The huge task of guiding people in need of psychological support and counselling was taken up worldwide by a huge network of change initiatives, called "The Cafés of Hope", applying positive psychology, grief and trauma counselling, healing, storytelling and practical neighbourhood help. The roots of this network can be traced back to a global transformation initiative, called The GAIA Journey, which took place online, in the midst of the worldwide COVID-19 lockdown in 2020."

Summary

Stories build bridges that have the potential to overcome the root causes of disconnection and help us to reconnect for the benefit of all. We feel that a reconnection should start from a place of an open heart, listening to people outside of our respective contexts and bubbles. By providing space for sharing, listening and harvesting of stories, we will gradually allow a new narrative to emerge and eventually activate the collective potential for a regenerative culture. This might happen as we, ourselves, live and embody the story, which allows us to communicate from an embodied and connected place with openness, compassion and curiosity.

A prototype could be spaces that facilitate connection and alignment. In the end it might all be about sharing positive stories and reshaping old narratives/values, in order to enable us as humans to reconnect to ourselves, each other and to nature.

A prototype to address key challenges that we found

A storylistening/harvesting initiative such as a “Future Café”, moderated value debates and art interventions will encourage people from all ages and social, cultural and religious backgrounds to share their change/ adaptation/ climate stories openly.

Further literature and resources

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DIE NEUE SCHWEIZ
LA NOUVELLE SUISSE
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THE NEW SWITZERLAND

AN INITIATIVE BY

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