

COMMONS



W O R L D

COMMONS COMMUNITY

A Field Guide to Commons World

*Sovereignty is not conferred from above.
It is a capacity that exists in you.*



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FOUNDER, COMMONS WORLD

Developed in collaboration with artificial-intelligence systems, which contributed research assistance, drafting support, and editorial review throughout. All final decisions, interpretations, and conclusions remain the responsibility of the author.

A Note from the Author

I have lived in Nigeria for more than thirty-six years. In that time I have watched extraordinary human ingenuity, warmth, and resilience coexist, daily, with systems that seem designed — not by accident but by architecture — to ensure that the people who create the most value receive the least of it, and that the people making the decisions that shape everyone else's lives remain the hardest to hold to account.

Nigeria is not unusual in this. It is, in many ways, a clear mirror of a global condition. The same pattern — concentrated power, externalised cost, managed invisibility — operates in every country, every economy, every information environment on Earth. The scale and the texture differ. The structure does not.

Commons World began as an attempt to describe that structure honestly — and then to ask what a different architecture might look like. Not a utopia. Not a demand that powerful people change their behaviour. Something more durable: a framework in which the consequences of decisions are harder to hide, the contributions of ordinary people are harder to ignore, and the sovereignty that belongs to every human being is harder to transfer without consent.

This booklet is the beginning of that framework, written for the room rather than the library. It is designed to be read in one sitting and used as a meeting guide many times over. It does not ask you to agree with everything in it. It asks only that you read it with the same honesty you would bring to any serious conversation about the world you actually inhabit.

The Commons Community is the practical expression of everything in these pages. A small group of people, in a room, choosing to see clearly together — and to decide what they can do about it where they live. That is not a small thing. It is, in fact, the only thing that has ever changed the world.

I hope you will begin.

Mohan Lal Mahtani

Lagos, Nigeria · 2026

Three Ways to Go Deeper

This booklet is the entry point. It is designed to be read in one sitting and used as a meeting guide as many times as you need. If it opens questions you want to pursue further, there are two companions waiting: *The Hidden World*, which goes deep into the evidence behind every challenge named here, and *The Visible World*, which carries the complete architecture.

The Hidden World – the free companion ebook

The Hidden World is the evidence companion to this booklet. Where this booklet introduces each of the twelve priority challenges in a page or two, *The Hidden World* expands each one into a full chapter: the specific named case, the exact law or doctrine that permits it, the pattern repeating elsewhere, and the specific agreement or repeal that would fix it — all with verified sources. It also includes a closing chapter on redesigning coherent governance: what stops an agreed-necessary law from being delayed indefinitely, and what the Commons World architecture offers in response. Free to download at commonsworld.org.

The Visible World – the founding book

The Visible World by Mohan Lal Mahtani is the complete founding document of Commons World — the full nine-chapter architecture, the research behind every Pillar, the Glossary, and the complete evidence base. It will be available in print in 2027. It is for those who want the full version of Commons World.

The Commons Community

Every Commons Community meeting is a step toward the world described in these pages. Find a community near you, or register your own, at commonsworld.org/community. No permission needed. No membership fee. No central authority. Simply a room, and people willing to see clearly together.



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Read it in one sitting if you can. Use it as a meeting guide as many times as you need. You do not have to agree with everything in it — only to read it with the same honesty you would bring to any serious conversation about the world you actually inhabit.



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PART ONE

An honest invitation

*Something is wrong with the world. Most people sense it.
The difficulty is seeing it clearly enough to know what to
do.*

Somewhere today a nurse will finish a second consecutive shift, a farmer will coax another season out of exhausted soil, and a parent will sit up through the night with a sick child — and not one of those hours will register in any figure a government calls ‘the economy.’ In the same year, 2025, the twelve richest individuals on Earth came to hold more wealth than the poorest half of humanity combined. These are not two separate facts. They are two ends of a single arrangement.

Something is wrong with the world. Most people sense it. The difficulty is not in sensing it — it is in seeing it clearly enough to know what to do, and in finding others who see the same thing.

This booklet exists because of that difficulty. It is for anyone who has read *The Visible World* and wants to think about it with others. It is equally for anyone who has not read it — who found this booklet online, received it from someone, or walked into a room where a Commons Community was meeting. You do not need to have read the book to belong here.

What you do need is a willingness to look honestly at what is happening in the world, and a desire to be part of something that is working to change it — not through outrage, not through campaign, but through clear sight, shared in community.

Commons World is not a political party, a religion, or a movement with a central organisation. It is a framework — nine interconnected institutions designed to make the world’s most important things visible: who is accountable for what, who is contributing to what, who is benefiting from what, and who is bearing the cost. The Commons Community is where that framework meets daily life.

*You do not need permission to begin.
You need only a room, one other person,
and a willingness to see clearly together.*

This booklet will walk you through everything you need: how to run a Commons Community meeting and your first practical steps, followed by the nine Pillars of Commons World and the twelve most pressing challenges facing humanity. It closes with questions and answers designed to open discussion at every meeting.

The world as it is

What has been lost

The world contains enough food, enough water, enough energy, and enough human ingenuity to ensure that every person on Earth lives with dignity. This is not a utopian claim. It is an observation about resources and capacity. The reason most people do not experience this as the reality they inhabit is not a lack of resources. It is a question of how those resources are owned, directed, and accounted for — and by whom.

Something has been taken from most people. Not in a single dramatic moment, but gradually, through thousands of decisions made by a small number of people in positions of institutional power, over many decades. The taking has happened across five dimensions. Together they describe the condition the world is in.

1 Economic sovereignty

The wealth produced by the work of ordinary people — in factories, fields, offices, homes, and communities — flows, with remarkable efficiency, toward those who are already wealthy. The farmer who grows the food, the worker who assembles the product, the carer who sustains the household: each creates real value that the economy registers but that rarely returns to them in proportion to what they contributed. In 2025, the wealthiest 1% owned more than the bottom 50% of the world's population combined.¹ The twelve richest individuals on Earth collectively held more wealth than the entire bottom half of humanity.²

2 Political sovereignty

In most countries, elections occur. In many of them, a measurable gap exists between what is promised during an election and what is done once office is held. Research published in 2014 examining twenty years of US policy found that the preferences of average citizens had a near-zero statistical influence on policy outcomes, while the preferences of economic elites and organised interest groups had substantial influence.³ This pattern is not confined to any single country. Transparency International's 2025 Corruption Perceptions Index found that more than two-thirds of the 182 countries assessed scored below 50 out of 100 for public-sector integrity.⁴

3 Digital sovereignty

When you use a search engine, a social platform, a mapping application, or a free communications tool, you agree to terms and

conditions that permit your activity to be recorded, analysed, and used to influence what you see and what you are shown. This consent is real in a legal sense. In practice, the terms are rarely written in plain language, rarely short enough to read in full, and rarely negotiable — the alternative is usually not to use the service at all. A 2008 study estimated that reading the privacy policies of the websites an average person visits each year would take approximately 201 hours.⁵ Consent given under these conditions is technically valid. Whether it is meaningfully informed is a different question.

4 Ecological sovereignty

The living world — the soil, the water, the air, the diversity of species that has taken billions of years to develop — is treated, in most economic and legal systems, as a resource with no rights and no standing of its own. Seven of the nine planetary boundaries identified by Earth-system science have now been exceeded.⁶ The costs of ecological depletion are borne primarily by those least responsible for causing it — typically the poorest communities, in the regions with the least political influence, and by generations not yet born.

5 Informational sovereignty

The most powerful tool available to those who benefit from the present arrangement is not force. It is the managed absence of clear sight. When people cannot see — clearly, together, and permanently — who is making which decisions, what the consequences are, and who bears the cost, they cannot act effectively on what they know. Research tracking public trust across 143 countries found that trust in parliaments declined by an average of 8.4 percentage points across democracies between 1990 and 2019 — while awareness of this structural decline remained fragmentary and poorly understood by most citizens.⁷

The pattern

These five losses are not five separate problems. They are five expressions of one condition: systems built, over generations, to concentrate power and externalise cost — to ensure that the benefits of economic activity flow upward, that the costs flow outward onto communities and the living world, and that the people bearing those costs find it difficult to see the arrangement clearly enough to change it.

The cause is not human nature. Human beings are not, by nature, indifferent to the suffering of others or to the destruction of the world they depend on. What has produced this condition is a structural alignment of incentives — built, piece by piece, into the institutions governing economic life, political life, digital life, ecological governance, and the information environment — that selects, consistently, for people who will perpetuate it.

Knowing this is not cause for despair. It is cause for precision. The question is not whether change is possible. History demonstrates repeatedly that arrangements which appeared permanent turned out not to be. The question is what kind of change, applied at what level of a system, produces durable results.

*The most powerful thing available to most people,
most of the time, is clear sight —
shared, permanent, and beyond the reach
of the next communications strategy.*

Why awareness, not demand

Demanding change from those who benefit from the present arrangement has rarely been sufficient on its own — not because protest is without value, but because the people most positioned to change these systems are also those the systems have most effectively selected for continuity rather than change. Acknowledging their authority to lead is, in itself, a concession the present arrangement depends upon.

There is a different lever — one that does not depend on anyone's cooperation. It depends on something that cannot be granted or withheld by any institution: the capacity of ordinary people, in large enough numbers, to see a pattern clearly enough to stop participating in the parts of it they have a choice about, and to start recognising and rewarding people, businesses, and practices that are already working differently.

We are sovereign beings.

Sovereignty is not a status conferred from above.

It is a capacity that exists whether or not it has been exercised.

A population that exercises it — that sees clearly, chooses consciously,

and acts from that clarity in community —

is a population that has already begun to change the world it inhabits.

This is what the Commons Community is for. Not to fight the present arrangement — fighting it acknowledges its right to be fought — but to see it clearly, together, and to build something different in the space

that clear sight creates. This is not a rejection of protest. Protest changes what is visible; what follows changes what is structural. The two work best together.

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PART TWO

How to run a Commons Community

Not a movement. Not a campaign. Simply a room where people who have seen something clearly choose to see it together.

You have just read an honest picture of the world. Perhaps it confirmed what you already sensed. Perhaps it named something you had not yet found words for.

The Commons Community is the answer to the question that picture raises: now what? Not a movement. Not a campaign. Not an organisation with a manifesto and a membership form. Simply a room — any room — where people who have seen something clearly choose to see it together, and to decide what they can do about it where they live.

Everything that follows tells you how. If the nine Pillars and twelve challenges named below are still only names to you, don't worry: Parts Four and Five explain each one in turn. This section is here for when you are ready to convene.

What a Commons Community is

A Commons Community is any group of people who gather — regularly, honestly, and without hierarchy — to understand the world more clearly and to decide together what they can do about it where they live.

It can be two people or twenty. A kitchen table or a community hall. Weekly, monthly, or whenever it is possible. In person or online. There are no dues, no membership requirements, no reporting obligations, and no central organisation to answer to. A Commons Community belongs entirely to the people in the room.

The one thing that makes it a Commons Community, rather than simply a conversation, is the commitment to use this booklet as a shared frame of reference — to move through the nine Pillars and twelve challenges together, with honesty and without pretending that things are simpler than they are, and to close every meeting with at least one thing to do before the next one.

What a meeting looks like

Each meeting focuses on one Pillar or one of the twelve priority challenges — the domains where the gap between what humanity knows and what it does is widest, and the consequences most serious. These are introduced in full in Part Five. Depth over breadth. One thing understood well is more useful than twelve things understood partially.

1. **Open** — someone reads the relevant Pillar page or challenge entry aloud. The whole group listens without interrupting.
2. **Inner Being** — the group practises Inner Being together for five minutes before discussion. Instructions are in Part Three of this booklet.

3. **Discuss** — the discussion question from the entry opens the conversation. Every voice matters. No one is an expert. Everyone is a witness to some part of the pattern.
4. **Act** — close with one concrete thing. Not a resolution. One action, one observation, one question to carry until the next meeting. Something specific enough that it can be reported on.
5. **Return** — the next meeting opens with a brief check-in: what did people notice? What did they do? What did they learn?

A note on music

For sessions covering Pillar 1 — Planetary Coherence & Health — consider opening with the song ‘He Ain’t Heavy, He’s My Brother’ before the reading begins. No introduction needed. It says everything the Pillar is about, in three minutes, in a way that lands before a single word of explanation is required. Listen at youtu.be/WtD1WUkqOLY.

A few principles for the room

- ▶ No one is required to agree with everything in this booklet — or in The Visible World. Disagreement, honestly expressed, is more useful than polite agreement.
- ▶ Speak from your own experience. ‘I think’ and ‘I’ve noticed’ are more honest than ‘everyone knows’ and ‘it’s obvious that’.
- ▶ Listen to understand, not to respond. The quality of attention in the room determines the quality of what the room produces.
- ▶ What is shared in the room stays in the room, unless everyone agrees otherwise.

- ▶ No one leads permanently. The role of facilitator rotates. The Commons Community belongs to everyone equally.

How to register and find others

Every Commons Community is listed on the interactive map at commonsworld.org/community. Registration takes two minutes: a name, a location, and a contact point. That is all. Anyone searching for a community near them will find you. Anyone who wants to start one can see that they are not alone.

When you register, you also gain access to the Commons Community network — a growing community of groups around the world who share observations, resources, and local actions through the same platform. You are not starting from scratch. You are joining something already in motion.

On leadership within a Commons Community

A Commons Community does not prescribe who may lead. It prescribes what leadership must look like: long-term in orientation, collaborative in method, and grounded in the values of care, stewardship, and service that Commons World is built to restore.

History has demonstrated that these values have been most reliably practised — and most systematically undervalued — by women. The unpaid care work that sustains civilisation. The community stewardship that holds daily life together. The collaborative styles that research consistently associates with stronger outcomes. These are not female traits. They are human capacities that women have disproportionately developed, carried, and been economically penalised for.

The founding intention of every Commons Community is therefore not to exclude men from leadership, but to actively seek, develop, and

prioritise the qualities the architecture is designed to reward — recognising that those qualities are more likely, given history, to be found in abundance in women who have spent lifetimes practising them without recognition. This is an argument about history and incentive, not biology: the qualities themselves can be developed by anyone, and the door to leadership is open to all who bring them. An institution built to make the invisible visible, led by people who have lived that invisibility longest, is an institution that means what it says.

A Commons Community does not need permission to exist.

It does not need to be large to matter.

It does not need to solve everything.

*It needs only to see clearly, together —
and to act from that clarity, one meeting at a time.*



PART THREE

Your first steps

Seven genuine acts of sovereignty — available to you now, requiring no institution's permission.

Seven steps. Each one is a genuine act of sovereignty — available to you now, requiring no institution's permission, no waiting for the right moment, no special qualification. Begin with whichever one is closest to where you already are.

- 1. See clearly** — verify what you are told before you share it. Start with the sources cited in this booklet. Learn the difference between a confirmed finding and an unverified claim — and treat that difference as important every time.
- 2. Know what you own** — your identity. Your data. Your attention. Your economic choices. These are yours. Understand what you have consented to give away, and to whom, and whether you still consent.
- 3. Choose where your money goes** — every purchase, every account, every subscription is a vote for the kind of world that continues to be built. You cannot control everything. You can control more than you currently do. Start there.

4. **Participate locally** — the scale at which your individual action is most directly visible is the street, the school, the local institution, the community organisation. What happens there is shaped by whether people like you show up — and by what they say when they do.
5. **Teach what you know** — sovereignty multiplies when it is shared. Tell someone what you learned here. Not to persuade them. To offer them the same possibility of clear sight that you now have. One conversation at a time.
6. **Refuse managed ignorance** — choose information sources that verify before they amplify. Notice which platforms and habits fragment your attention and which sustain it. Protect your capacity for sustained, independent thought as you would protect any other valuable resource — because it is the most valuable one you have.
7. **Connect** — find others already building differently. Start or join a Commons Community. Register at commonsworld.org/ community. You are not the only person in your area who sees this pattern. You may simply not have found the others yet.

*You do not need to change everything.
You need to change what is within your reach —
and trust that enough people doing the same thing
changes everything.*

Inner Being

Commons World addresses the outer world. But there is an older principle that suggests the outer world begins somewhere else entirely. What follows is an invitation to explore that possibility —

grounded in science, requiring nothing but forty minutes of your time each day.

Commons World is an architecture for the outer world. But the outer and the inner are not separate. The quality of attention, clarity, and steadiness that people bring to the world matters as much as the systems they are trying to change. This is why we include something no governance framework typically offers: a simple daily practice called Inner Being, which silences the conscious mind, allowing the Inner Being to surface.

The heart–brain connection

For most of human history we have believed that the brain runs the body. The heart pumps blood. The brain thinks, decides, and feels. Science has now shown this picture to be fundamentally incomplete.

The HeartMath Institute, founded in 1991 in California, has spent over 35 years researching the relationship between the heart and the brain. Their central discovery overturns what most of us were taught in school: the heart sends more signals to the brain than the brain sends to the heart.¹ These signals travel via the vagus nerve, the spinal cord, hormonal pathways, and the heart's own electromagnetic field — and they have a profound effect on how we think, feel, perceive, and decide.

The heart is not a passive pump. It contains its own intrinsic nervous system — a network of neurons, neurotransmitters, and support cells sophisticated enough that researchers call it 'the little brain in the heart.'² This cardiac nervous system can learn, remember, and act independently of the brain in the head. Its signals travel upward to the medulla, the hypothalamus, the thalamus, and the amygdala — the brain's primary centre for emotional memory and threat assessment.³

The heart communicates with the brain through four distinct pathways simultaneously: neurologically, biochemically, biophysically, and energetically through its electromagnetic field.⁴ Of

all the body's organs, the heart generates by far the largest rhythmic electromagnetic field — approximately 100 times stronger than that of the brain — detectable several feet from the body.⁵

Heart coherence — the measurable state of inner harmony

HeartMath researchers identified a specific physiological state they call heart coherence — a condition in which breathing rhythms, heart rhythms, brain rhythms, hormonal response, and immune function all synchronise and operate in harmony.⁶ This state is measurable and scientifically verifiable through heart rate variability (HRV) patterns — the natural variations in time between heartbeats that serve as a window into the health of the nervous system.

In states of stress, frustration, or anxiety, HRV patterns appear chaotic and disordered. The signals the heart sends to the brain in this state inhibit higher cognitive function — impairing clear thinking, memory, learning, and effective decision-making.⁷ In states of coherence, HRV patterns form smooth, ordered, wave-like rhythms that actively support clarity, creativity, emotional stability, and sound judgment.

What produces coherence? The research is consistent across decades and nearly ten million recorded sessions: genuine feelings of gratitude, appreciation, care, compassion, and love produce highly ordered heart rhythm patterns. These are not merely pleasant feelings — they are physiologically active states that reorganise the body's systems from the heart outward.⁸

When we experience appreciation, joy, care, and love, our heart rhythm pattern becomes highly ordered. The two branches of the autonomic nervous system synchronise and the body's systems operate with increased efficiency and harmony.⁹ The highest coherence scores were produced not by passive calm but by active positive states — joy, gratitude, enthusiasm, and love.¹⁰

The heart's field reaches beyond the body

Research has confirmed that when an individual is in a state of heart coherence, the heart radiates a more coherent electromagnetic signal into the environment — and that individual becomes more sensitive to the coherent signals of others.¹¹ Studies of groups in coherence have found that heart rhythm synchronisation occurs between people — a measurable group field connecting members simultaneously.¹²

Every individual's energy contributes to the global field environment. When people cultivate heartfelt emotions such as gratitude, appreciation, joy, and love, they are doing far more than improving their own wellbeing — they are contributing coherence to a shared field.¹³

Connection, not competition, is our nature

The world we have built prizes competition above almost everything else. The evidence suggests this premise is not only false but actively harmful.

The neurochemistry of competition produces cortisol — the body's primary stress hormone. Research confirms that competitive contexts produce measurable physiological stress with detrimental effects on physical and mental health over time. Cooperative settings produce equivalent performance without the physiological cost.¹⁴

The neurochemistry of connection produces oxytocin — a neuropeptide fundamental to trust, empathy, generosity, and prosocial behaviour. Research published in *Nature* demonstrated that oxytocin causes a substantial increase in trust and willingness to accept social risk in interpersonal interaction.¹⁵ A separate review proposed oxytocin as the proximate biological mechanism for large-scale cooperation in human societies.¹⁶

The Harvard Study of Adult Development — the longest-running scientific study of human wellbeing ever conducted, spanning 85 years — found that the quality of human relationships is the single most important predictor of health, happiness, and longevity. Not

wealth. Not status. Not genes.¹⁷ Relationship satisfaction at age 50 was a stronger predictor of physical health at 80 than cholesterol levels.¹⁸ Loneliness and social isolation posed health risks comparable to smoking.¹⁷

We are not built for competition. We are built for connection. The competitive model is a cultural imposition on a biological reality that points in the opposite direction.

We have the power. We have forgotten how to access it.

The modern condition is not powerlessness. It is disconnection from power that was always there.

People are not weak. They are overloaded. The relentless demand for attention — notifications, obligations, noise, speed — has buried something that does not go away. It only becomes harder to hear. The anxiety, the reactivity, the sense of being swept along rather than choosing — these are not character flaws. They are the symptoms of a life lived entirely on the surface, without return to the source.

Inner Being does not give people power. It removes what is obscuring it.

*When we slow down, we can simply be again.
And when we can simply be, our power returns.*

The open question

From stillness, something shifts. Attention that was turned inward toward worry and survival begins to turn outward. A question arises — not as an instruction, but as the natural movement of a quieted mind:

What do I have that I can offer the world? What can I contribute, share, give?

This question opens the door to thriving. Not because giving is a duty, but because outward orientation is the natural movement of a coherent heart. Gratitude, care, and generosity are the spontaneous

expressions of a nervous system no longer dominated by threat and scarcity.

Happiness is not the destination. It is what arrives when we stop looking for it — when attention moves from what we need to what we have to give.

Inner Being — the practice

Not a technique borrowed from any tradition. Not a method requiring a teacher, a certification, or any cost. A natural human capacity being consciously reclaimed.

Begin with five minutes. Build gradually toward twenty. Twice a day if you can — morning and early evening work well for most people.

Start here. Repeat slowly:

There's nothing I have to have, there's nothing I have to do, and there's nothing I have to be, except exactly what I'm being right now.

1. Sit comfortably, spine upright, hands resting gently in your lap.
2. Begin by placing one hand lightly on your heart. When you are ready, lower it gently to your lap and hold your awareness there.
3. Close your eyes. Breathe naturally. Simply notice the breath. It is your constant companion throughout — do not control or deepen it.
4. Bring your attention to the area of your heart. Rest there.
5. Recall something you genuinely appreciate — a person, a moment, a simple thing. Let the feeling arise rather than the thought. Then gently release it and allow the mind to rest in silence. No thought. Simply being.
6. When the mind wanders — and it will — use your chosen word as a quiet signal to return. Come back to the breath, the heart, and the silence. Not to a thought. Not to a feeling. Simply back to Inner Being.
7. When your time is complete, do not open your eyes immediately. Sit quietly for a minute or so. Let awareness return gently. Notice how you feel. When you are ready, open your eyes slowly and return to the world.

After each session, before you return fully to the day, a question may arise naturally: what do I have to give? Do not pursue it. Simply

notice what surfaces from the silence. The answer, when it comes, will not be a thought. It will be a knowing.

*Time spent within eventually changes one's mind —
and therefore, one's world.*

What changes — after a few months of Inner Being

These are not theories. They are the reported experience of people who have practised consistently, confirmed by peer-reviewed research across decades.

INNER EXPERIENCE

- ▶ Less stress, anxiety, and chronic worry
- ▶ Reduced fear and reactivity in difficult situations
- ▶ Lighter mood — periods of depression become less frequent and less heavy
- ▶ Greater patience — with others, with circumstances, with yourself
- ▶ A quieter inner voice — less self-criticism, less mental noise

HOW YOU SHOW UP WITH OTHERS

- ▶ More present in conversation — genuinely listening rather than waiting to speak
- ▶ Clearer, calmer communication — words chosen rather than reactive
- ▶ Greater tolerance — differences in others become less irritating
- ▶ More empathy — space to feel what another person is carrying
- ▶ A natural movement toward contribution — toward giving rather than acquiring

HOW YOU THINK AND WORK

- ▶ Sharper focus — the mind wanders less, returns faster
- ▶ Better decisions — made from stillness rather than pressure
- ▶ More creativity — ideas arrive in the quiet that busy minds cannot access
- ▶ Less procrastination — clarity replaces the paralysis of overthinking
- ▶ Sharper discernment — the ability to sense truth from fiction, authenticity from performance, substance from noise

THE BODY

- ▶ Lower blood pressure¹⁹
- ▶ Slower heart rate¹⁹
- ▶ Deeper, more restorative sleep²⁰
- ▶ Stronger immune response²¹
- ▶ Reduced inflammation — the biological root of many chronic conditions²²
- ▶ Slower cellular ageing — measurable at the level of our genes²¹

THE COLLECTIVE

- ▶ Research across nearly fifty studies found that when a small proportion of a population practises regular stillness together, measurable reductions in crime, violence, accidents, and hospitalisation follow²³
- ▶ A 1993 study in Washington DC found up to 23% reduction in violent crime during organised group practice²⁴

- Research in Merseyside, England documented a 13.4% fall in crime against a national backdrop where crime had risen by 45%²⁵

The invitation

Commons World does not prescribe a spiritual path. We make no claim about what stillness is, where it leads, or what it means. We ask only that you try it — forty minutes a day, sitting comfortably, breathing consciously, being still in body and mind.

What you find there is your own.

But we believe — and the evidence supports — that a Commons Community whose members carry this quality of inner settledness will do better work, make clearer decisions, hold steadier purpose, and contribute something to the world that no framework alone can provide.

The outer work needs an inner ground. This is ours.



SOURCES – INNER BEING

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3. McCraty, R. *Science of the Heart*, Volume 2. HeartMath Institute, 2016 — afferent cardiac signals travel to medulla, hypothalamus, thalamus, and amygdala; direct effect on emotional processing and threat assessment.
4. Noetic Systems International. 'Thinking from the Heart — Heart Brain Science.' noeticsi.com, 2016 — four communication pathways: neurological, biochemical, biophysical, and electromagnetic.
5. McCraty, R. *Science of the Heart*, Volume 2. HeartMath Institute, 2016 — heart's electromagnetic field approximately 100 times stronger than the brain's; detectable several feet from the body.

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9. HeartMath, Inc. 'The Science of HeartMath.' heartmath.com, 2026 — appreciation, joy, care, and love produce highly ordered coherent heart rhythm patterns; autonomic nervous system synchronisation.
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11. McCraty, R. 'Global Coherence Research,' Chapter 11, *Science of the Heart*. HeartMath Institute — individuals in heart coherence radiate more coherent electromagnetic signals and become more sensitive to others' fields.
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26. Dusek, J.A. et al., 'Genomic Counter-Stress Changes Induced by the Relaxation Response,' PLoS ONE, Vol. 3, No. 7, 2008 — anti-inflammatory and anti-oxidative genomic changes; reductions in heart rate, blood pressure, and metabolic rate.
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Sovereignty is not a status conferred from above.

*It is a capacity that exists in you —
whether or not it has yet been exercised.*

This room is where it begins.

This conversation is how it grows.

This world is what it builds.



PART FOUR

The nine Pillars of Commons World

*What they are, what they do, and what changes when
they exist.*

The nine Pillars are not nine separate projects. They are nine interdependent parts of one architecture — each one doing work the others depend on. They can be understood individually, but they only become fully operational together. Part Four introduces each Pillar in turn, beginning with the one that provides the foundation for all the others.

Pillar 1 — Planetary Coherence & Health

The foundation

The problem

The global economy has no agreed measure of what it is actually for. Gross Domestic Product — the primary metric by which governments assess the health of their economies — measures the total value of goods and services produced and sold within a country. It does not measure what was lost or damaged in the producing. A country can deplete its freshwater reserves, clear its forests, degrade its soil, and record each of these acts as growth. It can allow the physical and mental health of its workforce to deteriorate and weaken the social bonds that make communities function — and none of this reduces the GDP figure. Some of it increases it, because the harms generate spending on treatment, litigation, and remediation.¹

This is not a technical measurement problem. It is a values problem expressed through the architecture of measurement. When the primary metric of economic success does not register harm to people, to communities, or to the living systems that sustain human life, the decisions made in pursuit of that metric will predictably cause harm. The architecture of measurement shapes the architecture of incentives. Neither is neutral.

What it does

Planetary Coherence & Health (PCH) establishes the foundational framework for the entire Commons World architecture. It does three things. First, it defines the **Prime Directive** — the founding ethical commitment that runs through every institution in Commons World: *Do No Harm* — to any living being, human, animal, or creature of the living world, or to Gaia, the living system that sustains all life. Not as

a slogan, but as a structural requirement. Second, it establishes the **Nine Principles** — the agreed conditions that must be met for a decision, an institution, or an economic activity to be considered coherent. Third, it establishes the **Six Baseline Domains** and **Six Governing Bodies** through which coherence can be measured, maintained, and protected across time.

The nine principles

1. **Human dignity is non-negotiable** — every person possesses inherent worth and must never be reduced to a resource, commodity, data point, or instrument for another’s benefit.
2. **Truth before preference** — reality does not negotiate. Evidence is more important than ideology, convenience, or commercial interest.
3. **Consequences must remain visible** — actions must remain connected to their impacts across time and place, including in digital systems.
4. **The polluter bears the cost** — no institution may privatise gains while externalising harm: environmental, social, financial, or digital.
5. **Future generations have standing** — long-term consequences deserve representation alongside present interests.
6. **Diversity sustains resilience** — resilience requires variation and plurality. Monocultures — biological, economic, or digital — create hidden vulnerability.
7. **Knowledge is a commons** — knowledge essential to human flourishing must remain accessible to all.

8. **Sovereignty is inalienable, online and offline** — every human being possesses inherent sovereignty over their body, identity, consent, and participation.
9. **The web of life is indivisible** — no organism, community, economy, or civilisation exists independently from the wider living systems that sustain it.

The six baseline domains

The Six Baseline Domains are the measurement framework of PCH — the six areas of human and ecological life against which every institution, enterprise, and public policy in Commons World is evaluated: **human flourishing; ecological integrity; material & technological safety; social cohesion & participation; systemic resilience; and intergenerational stewardship.**

The six governing bodies

PCH is stewarded through six interdependent institutions designed to prevent capture by any single interest: the **Council for Planetary Coherence**, the primary stewardship body; the **Baseline Research Institute**, which evaluates evidence and recommends how baselines should evolve; the **Ancestral Wisdom Assembly**, which contributes Indigenous and place-based knowledge; the **Arbitration Chamber**, the independent review body for disputes; the **Baseline Literacy Division**, which translates complex baseline knowledge into accessible forms; and the **Global Commons Advocacy Council**, which turns verified findings into legal-reform recommendations and advocates for their adoption.

What changes

When a society has agreed, independently maintained baselines for what constitutes genuine flourishing — and when those baselines cannot be lowered by the interests most likely to want to lower them

— every decision about economic activity, technology, land use, and institutional governance can be evaluated against something real, rather than only against what is profitable this quarter. The conversation about what the economy is for changes. Not because people become more virtuous, but because the framework within which decisions are made has changed.

*The world does not lack agreement on values.
It lacks the architecture through which those values
can be measured, maintained, and held
against the institutions that claim to share them.
That architecture begins here.*

☛ *Allow your eyes to close, or soften your gaze toward the floor. Take three slow breaths. With each exhale, let the concerns of the day settle slightly further away.*

Bring your attention to the ground beneath you — whatever is supporting your weight right now. Feel that support. It is not abstract. It is physical, real, and present.

Now expand your awareness slowly outward. The room. The building. The street. The city or landscape surrounding it. The living planet beneath all of it — soil, water, root systems, weather patterns, the interconnected web of species that has maintained the conditions for life for billions of years.

You are part of this. Not separate from it, observing it — part of it. Every breath you take is an exchange with this system. Every choice you make sends a ripple into it.

Rest in that awareness for a moment. Not with urgency. With belonging. Then carry the felt sense of belonging into the conversation that follows.

SOURCES – PILLAR 1

1. Stiglitz, J., Sen, A., and Fitoussi, J-P., Report by the Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress, 2009 — GDP's structural exclusion of environmental and social costs.
2. PCH architecture — Nine Principles, Six Baseline Domains, Six Governing Bodies: The Visible World, Chapter 1.

Pillar 2 – Commons Registry

Permanent memory

The problem

Every institution that has ever caused harm has depended, to some degree, on the same thing: that the record of what it did would not follow it. A corporation can release a contaminated product, pay a settlement, and relaunch under a new brand. A politician can make a commitment to a community and quietly abandon it once the election is won. An executive whose decisions cause lasting damage can move to a new role, carrying no visible record of what happened on their watch. This is not primarily the result of dishonesty. It is the result of architecture — a world in which institutional memory is fragmented, controlled by those being remembered, and subject to managed erosion over time.¹

The consequences are not abstract. When the record does not persist, accountability can only ever be retrospective and partial. The journalist who uncovers the story must start from the beginning each time. The regulator who investigates must rebuild the evidence that already existed. The community affected must fight, again, to establish what has already been established. The cost of this — in time, resources, and human suffering — is enormous. It is also entirely preventable.

What it does

The Commons Registry (CR) is a permanent, distributed public record maintained across thousands of independently operated servers — universities, research institutes, civil-society organisations — so that no single institution can alter, erase, or control it. It records verified findings about organisations and individuals whose decisions

affect others: what they committed to, what they did, and what the independently verified consequences were. Public commitments made by elected officials, senior executives, and regulators are deposited at the moment of making — so the record exists before memory fades and before the next communications strategy is deployed.

The Registry also records the public conduct of prominent people in positions of public trust. What is recorded is their public role: the commitments they made, the decisions they took, the verified consequences. What is *not* recorded is their private life, their personal health, or their family — unless these directly constitute a matter of public interest. A politician's offshore holdings linked to decisions made in office are a public-interest matter. Their medical history is not. The line is clear, and it is maintained. Where new evidence, an exoneration, or a correction emerges, it is permanently linked to the original entry under the Correction & Restoration Protocol — the original is never quietly removed, because the full arc of what happened is the record.

What changes

When the record persists permanently — when a commitment made in 2025 is still visible and still linked to what followed in 2030, in 2040, in 2050 — the relationship between power and accountability changes structurally. Not because people become more honest by nature, but because the cost of the gap between what is said and what is done increases when that gap cannot be made to disappear. Accountability

stops being an event that happens at election time. It becomes a condition that is always present.

*Memory is power.
When the record belongs to everyone
and can be altered by no one,
it belongs to you — as much as to any institution.
The truth does not have to disappear.*

✎ *Sit quietly for a moment and allow your breathing to slow.*

Bring to mind something you know to be true — something you witnessed, experienced, or understood clearly — that was later denied, minimised, or simply forgotten by the people responsible for it. Notice what that feels like. The particular quality of knowing something true that has been made to seem uncertain.

Now imagine that the record of what you knew could never be erased — that it existed permanently, visibly, accessible to anyone who wanted to verify it. Notice what shifts. Not anger. Something quieter. The relief of a truth that does not depend on anyone's cooperation to remain true. Carry that settled quality into the conversation that follows.

SOURCES — PILLAR 2

1. Mayer-Schönberger, V., *Delete: The Virtue of Forgetting in the Digital Age*, Princeton University Press, 2009.
2. CR architecture, deposit pathways, and public-interest boundaries: *The Visible World*, Chapter 2.

Pillar 3 — Alliance for Transparent Enterprise

Independent verification

The problem

Most of the harm that large organisations cause is legal. This is not because the harm is acceptable. It is because the laws governing corporate conduct were written — often with the active participation of the industries they regulate — at a time when the harm was not yet fully understood, or in ways that define accountability narrowly enough to exclude it. An enterprise can operate a supply chain that depends on unsafe working conditions abroad and keep a clean legal record at home. It can make environmental commitments in its annual report that no external body has the mandate to check. The gap between what organisations claim and what they do is not primarily closed by law. It is currently closed by nothing.¹

The consequence is an economy in which responsible organisations compete on unequal terms with irresponsible ones. When actual conduct is not independently verified, responsible behaviour is a cost and irresponsible behaviour is a concealed advantage. The market, without independent verification, cannot tell them apart.

What it does

The Alliance for Transparent Enterprise (ATE) is an independent investigation institution. It examines what organisations actually do — not what they report, not what their communications teams have prepared — across six audit domains that test conduct against the standards Planetary Coherence & Health sets: human flourishing, ecological integrity, material and technological safety, ownership and financial accountability, systemic resilience, and intergenerational stewardship. Investigations are unannounced. Findings are deposited

in the Commons Registry immediately upon completion, before the organisation being assessed is notified. They cannot be delayed for communications planning, legal negotiation, or reputation management.²

For organisations where adverse findings are confirmed, ATE maintains the **Upgrade Pathway**: a verified, publicly visible route through which organisations demonstrate measurable improvement through independently confirmed corrective action. Improvement is not claimed. It is demonstrated, measured, and permanently recorded.

What changes

When independent, unannounced investigation is the norm rather than the exception — and when the findings are permanent, public, and reflected in the rating visible at every point of economic decision — the competitive advantage of concealment disappears. Responsible conduct becomes verifiable; irresponsible conduct becomes visible. Over time, the market, the regulatory environment, and public trust all begin to reward what can be demonstrated rather than what is merely asserted. The race to the bottom begins, structurally, to reverse.

Accountability does not require the powerful to want it.

*It requires only that what they do
is visible — permanently, independently,
and beyond their control.*

*Independent verification is the condition under which honest
enterprise thrives.*

☞ *Take a moment to settle. A few slow breaths.*

Bring to mind a choice you made recently — something small is fine. Now consider honestly: what were the full consequences of that choice? Not just the immediate ones. The wider ones — on other people, on the environment, on systems you may not have thought about.

Notice that this kind of honest seeing is not comfortable. It requires a willingness to stay present with what we find, even when it is inconvenient. And notice something else: this quality of consequence-aware seeing is not a burden. It is the precondition for acting with integrity. Rest in the intention to see clearly — not as self-punishment, but as the foundation of genuine freedom.

SOURCES – PILLAR 3

1. Dal Bó, E., 'Regulatory Capture: A Review', Oxford Review of Economic Policy, vol. 22, no. 2, 2006.
2. ATE methodology, six audit domains, Upgrade Pathway: The Visible World, Chapter 3.

Pillar 4 – Global Accountability Rating

The translation layer

The problem

Making information available is not the same as making it usable. The Alliance for Transparent Enterprise investigates what organisations actually do, and the Commons Registry preserves those findings permanently. But a permanent public record is only as useful as the number of people who can access and act on it at the moment of decision. Most people making economic choices — where to shop, where to bank, which employer to work for — do not have time to read investigation reports. They need the information that matters most, in the simplest possible form, at the point where it can actually influence their choice.¹

Without a translation layer, the most important findings remain effectively inaccessible to the majority of people whose decisions could hold an organisation to account. The gap between information and action is not a gap in knowledge. It is a gap in usability.

What it does

The Global Accountability Rating (GAR) translates verified findings into a single, globally consistent seven-colour signal — visible at a glance on any product, institution, or service, anywhere in the world. **Red** means active, verified harm. **Orange** means verified gaps identified but not yet engaged with. **Yellow** means the organisation has entered the Upgrade Pathway and improvement is underway. **Green** means full alignment with all six baseline domains — the threshold of responsible participation, not extraordinary achievement. **Blue** means Green plus verified regenerative contribution. **Violet** means Blue sustained across three consecutive assessment cycles.

White — Exemplary — is awarded rarely, through public deliberation, for contribution that has advanced civilisational understanding of what coherent enterprise can be.

The signal operates at three depths: the colour at a glance, a domain breakdown on request, and the full Registry record beneath that for anyone who wants to go deeper. The same signal in every country, every industry, every scale of enterprise. The **Ceiling Rule** prevents any single product's rating from exceeding its parent enterprise's overall rating by more than one level, closing the greenwashing loophole. This rating also applies to senior public officials and executives whose individual conduct is recorded — the same seven colours, translated from institutional to individual accountability.

What changes

When the verified conduct of every organisation is visible at the point of every decision — to every consumer, investor, employer, and regulator at once — the incentive to conceal harm weakens and the incentive to demonstrate genuine responsibility strengthens. Not through regulation alone, but through the accumulated weight of millions of daily choices made by people who can finally see what they are choosing between. The market begins, structurally, to reward what is real rather than what is narrated.

You already vote with your money every day.

GAR makes that vote informed.

The power was always yours.

What was missing was the information.

☞ *Take a breath and settle for a moment.*

Think of a recent choice you made as a consumer — something you bought, a service you used, a platform you continued to subscribe to. Ask yourself honestly: if you had known, at that moment, the verified reality of how that organisation treats its workers, its environmental footprint, its governance — would you have chosen differently?

Notice what it feels like to not know. Now imagine that clarity was simply there — one glance, immediately available, wherever you looked. Notice what that changes. Not guilt. Not complexity. Simply the quiet confidence of choosing with open eyes. Carry that quality into the conversation that follows.

SOURCES — PILLAR 4

1. Akerlof, G., 'The Market for Lemons', Quarterly Journal of Economics, vol. 84, no. 3, 1970.
2. GAR architecture, three-depth signal, Ceiling Rule, Individual Accountability Ratings: The Visible World, Chapter 4.

Pillar 5 — Commons Bank & Commons Unit of Exchange

The sovereign economy

The problem

The global financial system does not register the most important work that sustains it. Women perform an estimated 12.5 billion hours of unpaid care work every single day — caring for children, the elderly, and the sick — work that, if paid at minimum wage, would be valued at more than \$10.8 trillion annually: over three times the size of the global technology sector.¹ Farmers who restore degraded soil, communities that maintain watersheds and forests, individuals who build resilience in their neighbourhoods: each creates lasting value the broader economy depends on and does not pay for. This is not an oversight. It is a structural feature of an economy built to measure transactions, not contributions.

At the same time, 1.3 billion adults worldwide remain entirely outside the formal financial system — unable to open a bank account, build a credit history, or access the financial tools through which most economic opportunity is now distributed.² Fifty-five per cent are women. For these 1.3 billion people, the economy is not a system they participate in on equal terms. It is one that has made their participation structurally difficult by design.

What it does

Commons Bank (CB) is a sovereign financial institution — governed under Commons World principles, independently verified, and answerable to no shareholders. It holds accounts in both the Commons Unit of Exchange and fiat currency, provides low-cost international transfers, offers commons-focused lending and

microfinance, and provides financial services without the credit history, collateral, or geographic proximity that currently exclude 1.3 billion people from conventional banking.

The Commons Unit of Exchange (CUE) is the sovereign currency of Commons World and the economic expression of the Prime Directive. It is issued exclusively by Commons Bank upon independent verification of a measurable contribution to human or ecological wellbeing — recorded permanently in the Commons Registry. It cannot be speculated upon, mined, or created through debt. When a farmer restores degraded land, a community cleans a river, or a carer's work is authenticated, CUE is issued directly to them. **Contribution precedes recognition. Always.**

What changes

When contribution to human and ecological wellbeing generates real economic recognition — when the farmer who restores the land, the carer who sustains the family, and the community that protects the watershed receive verified value for what they do — the economy begins, for the first time in its history, to see the work it depends on. The incentive structure that has driven extraction for three centuries begins, slowly and structurally, to change. Not through redistribution alone. Through recognition.

The economy has never paid for the work that sustains it.

That is not a law of nature. It is a design choice.

And design choices can be changed —

*beginning with the recognition that your contribution,
seen or unseen, paid or unpaid, is real.*

🪑 *Settle into your seat. Take a few slow breaths.*

Bring to mind something you do — regularly, quietly, perhaps without recognition — that contributes to the wellbeing of others or to the world around you. It does not need to be dramatic. A kindness extended. A space maintained. A presence offered to someone who needed it.

Sit with the reality of that contribution for a moment. Not with pride — simply with the honest acknowledgement that it is real, that it has value. Now notice: does the economy agree with you? For most of us, for most of what matters most, the answer is no. Rest in the knowledge that this is a design failure, not a reflection of the true value of what you do. And carry into the conversation the question: what would change if the economy could finally see this work?

SOURCES — PILLAR 5

1. Oxfam International, 'Time to Care', January 2020 — 12.5 billion hours of unpaid care work daily, valued at \$10.8 trillion annually.
2. World Bank, Global Findex Database 2025 — 1.3 billion adults unbanked; 55% female.
3. CB & CUE architecture: The Visible World, Chapter 5.

Pillar 6 — Autonomous Unified Rights Architecture

Digital sovereignty

The problem

Every digital service most people use daily — search, navigation, social connection, news, communication — is free at the point of use and paid for by the sale of data about the people using it. This is not a secret. It is the stated business model of the largest technology companies in the world. The consequence is an information environment shaped, at its foundation, not by what is true or useful to the person using it, but by what generates the most engagement, the most data, and the most advertising revenue. A 2023 study found that the five largest technology platforms collectively held behavioural data profiles on over five billion people.¹

For the 2.6 billion people not yet connected to the internet at all, the starting line for participation in the digital economy has not yet been reached.² For those who are connected, the terms of that connection — who owns the identity, who holds the data, who profits from the behaviour — have been decided by a small number of companies in a small number of countries, without meaningful input from the people whose lives they govern.

What it does

The Autonomous Unified Rights Architecture (AURA) is a sovereign digital device and environment — far more than a phone — through which individuals communicate, search, navigate, learn, verify, participate, and hold digital assets through twenty-four built-in capabilities, while retaining full sovereignty over their identity, data, and information. It operates on a peer-to-peer mesh network,

reducing dependency on the centralised infrastructure owned by the same companies whose business model depends on harvesting data. A longer-term satellite layer will extend connectivity to the 2.6 billion people current infrastructure is least likely to reach.

The capabilities fall into four groups. **Identity and security** — sovereign identity, on-device biometric authentication, encrypted storage, and protection that blocks unauthorised access without itself harvesting behaviour. **Communication and navigation** — encrypted messaging, sovereign mapping, private search, and real-time translation, all processed on-device. **Learning and participation** — the lifelong learning record, civic voting tools, community evidence submission, and full offline capability. **Economic and wellbeing** — integrated access to Commons Bank, sovereign payment, a digital wallet, on-device wellbeing support, and a personal health record. One device. One sovereign identity. No advertising. No profiling.

What changes

When your digital identity belongs to you — when your search history, your location, your health record, your credentials, and your communications are yours to share or withhold as you choose — the relationship between the individual and the digital world changes fundamentally. You are no longer the product. You are the participant. The business model that has shaped the information environment for two decades — engagement over accuracy, profiling over privacy, harvesting over service — loses its structural advantage over one that does not.

Your attention is not a resource to be harvested.

Your identity is not a product to be sold.

Your data is not the price of participation.

*These things belong to you —
and the architecture to reclaim them can be built.*

☞ *Take a moment to sit quietly. Let your breathing slow.*

Bring your attention to your body as it is right now — the weight of it, the warmth of it, the breath moving through it. This body is yours. No institution has access to it without your consent. No algorithm is profiling it. It simply is — present, whole, and sovereign.

Now extend that sense of wholeness to your mind. Your thoughts, your attention, your curiosity, your values — these too are yours. They exist before any platform attempts to shape them, and they remain yours after you close every screen. You are not a passive recipient of the digital world you inhabit. You are a participant in its design. Carry that awareness — sovereign, clear, unhurried — into the conversation that follows.

SOURCES – PILLAR 6

1. Electronic Frontier Foundation, 'Big Tech and Data: Platform Surveillance in 2023', 2023.
2. International Telecommunication Union, 2025 — 2.6 billion people unconnected to the internet.
3. Zuboff, S., The Age of Surveillance Capitalism, PublicAffairs, 2019. AURA architecture: The Visible World, Chapter 6.

Pillar 7 — Commons Education

Learning to think

The problem

The dominant model of education worldwide was designed for an industrial economy — one in which the primary task was transmitting a defined body of knowledge to students who would apply it in relatively stable roles throughout their working lives. That economy no longer exists. Artificial intelligence can now generate, retrieve, and synthesise information faster and at greater scale than any human being. The World Economic Forum projects that structural change, much of it driven by AI, will displace 92 million jobs globally while creating 170 million new ones — but the new jobs are not necessarily in the same places, for the same people, on the timescale they need.¹ The scarcest resource in this environment is not information. It is the capacity to evaluate it.

The foundational crisis compounds this. A 2025 World Bank study found that after three years of schooling, more than 90% of students in low- and middle-income countries could not read at the level expected for their grade.² A system already failing to deliver foundational literacy to a majority of its children is being asked, simultaneously, to prepare those same children for an economy being transformed faster than the system can adapt.

What it does

Commons Education (CE) comprises two institutions. **Commons Academy** is the professional education and certification body that trains practitioners across all nine Pillars — nine specialist pathways, each requiring a free Foundation Course covering the Prime Directive, the Nine Principles, and the standards of evidence that apply across

the entire architecture. **Commons Learning** is a free, universal, lifelong learning platform built around sixteen subjects and open to anyone, anywhere, at any age, regardless of prior qualification or income.

The curriculum is organised not around the transmission of information but around the development of **discernment** — the capacity to evaluate evidence, identify assumptions, recognise manipulation, understand interconnected systems, communicate effectively, and adapt to genuinely new situations. The Commons Method of Inquiry underpins every subject: What exactly is the question? What evidence is available? Who produced it, and under what conditions? What alternative explanations exist? What conclusion is actually justified? Am I willing to revise my view if better evidence emerges? Every qualification earned is held in the sovereign learning record within AURA, belonging to the individual, not to any institution.

What changes

When education develops the capacity to think rather than the capacity to recall — and when that education is free, lifelong, and available to anyone regardless of geography, income, or prior qualification — the gap between those with access to discernment and those without begins to close. A more discerning population is harder to manipulate, more capable of self-governance, and better equipped to hold institutions to account. The information environment described in every other Pillar becomes navigable when the people

moving through it have been equipped with genuine tools of evaluation.

You were not educated to think independently.

*You were educated in a system that had not yet understood
what you would need.*

*Discernment is not a gift. It is a skill —
cultivable, learnable, and available to anyone willing to begin.*

🕯️ *Settle quietly. Take a few slow breaths.*

Now try something simple. Choose one object in the room and give it your full, undivided attention for thirty seconds. Not thinking about it. Not judging it. Simply seeing it — its shape, its colour, its texture, the way the light falls on it. Try it now, before reading further.

Notice what that required. The effort to hold attention on one thing, when the mind wants to move. This is the foundation of discernment: you cannot evaluate evidence clearly with a fragmented mind. The capacity you just experienced is trainable. It grows with practice. Carry the intention to practise it — one minute a day, one focused conversation, one thing at a time — into everything that follows.

SOURCES – PILLAR 7

1. World Economic Forum, Future of Jobs Report 2025 — 92 million jobs displaced, 170 million created.
2. World Bank, Effective Reading Instruction in Low- and Middle-Income Countries, October 2025.
3. CE architecture: The Visible World, Chapter 7.

Pillar 8 – One Story Network

Shared reality

The problem

The information environment most people inhabit was not designed to inform them. It was designed to engage them — to maximise the time they spend on a platform, the emotions they feel while there, and the data they generate. A landmark 2018 study published in *Science* found that false news spreads on social platforms approximately six times faster than true news — not because people prefer falsehood, but because false news tends to be more novel and more emotionally provocative, and therefore more engaging to share.¹ In an environment optimised for engagement, the structural incentive to verify before amplifying is absent. The result is an information ecosystem in which the verified and the unverified exist side by side, indistinguishable to most people most of the time.

The consequences extend well beyond inconvenience. When shared reality — the common factual ground on which democratic deliberation depends — becomes difficult to maintain, the institutions that depend on it weaken alongside it. An information environment that systematically rewards the emotionally amplified over the verified is not a neutral backdrop to that decline. It is one of its structural causes.²

What it does

The One Story Network (OSN) comprises two channels. **Commons News** is a distributed network of professional journalism operating at community, city, regional, national, and international scales at once, funded without advertising, and governed by a single non-negotiable standard: verification before amplification. Every piece of content

carries a permanent, visible status marker — Verified, Partially Verified, Unresolved, Disputed, Evolving, or Insufficiently Substantiated — so the evidential status of what a reader is seeing is always visible alongside it, and cannot be altered retroactively once deposited in the Commons Registry.

People's News is the citizen-participation channel — a verified evidence network, not a rumour network. Through the Commons Contribute capability within AURA, authenticated individuals submit observations, recordings, photographs, and testimony to the Alliance for Transparent Enterprise — the only institution with the authority to verify evidence and authorise its deposit into the Registry. Where the evidential standard is met, the finding is deposited permanently and published carrying the appropriate status marker. The submitter's sovereign identity protects them from retaliation. The evidence, once verified, carries full verifiable weight.

What changes

When the verified and the unverified are visibly and permanently distinguished — when a fabricated account cannot circulate with the same apparent authority as a confirmed one, and when an ordinary person's authenticated testimony carries the same evidential weight as a professional reporter's — the information environment changes structurally. Not through censorship, which suppresses content. Through architecture, which labels it. Shared reality becomes maintainable again — and with it, the kind of informed public deliberation that democratic governance depends on.

*You have the right to know whether what you are reading
has been verified — or not.*

*The truth does not belong to those with the largest platforms.
It belongs to whoever can demonstrate it.*

☯ Sit quietly for a moment. Let your breathing slow.

Bring to mind a moment recently when you encountered a piece of information and felt genuinely uncertain whether it was true. Not because you were confused, but because you had no way to know. No means of verification. No indication of where it came from or how it had been checked.

Notice what that uncertainty feels like. Now imagine a different quality of attention — the stillness that comes when you are perceiving something exactly as it is, able to distinguish, clearly and without anxiety, between what is known and what is not. Carry that quality into the conversation that follows — and into how you read the news tomorrow.

SOURCES – PILLAR 8

1. Vosoughi, S., Roy, D., and Aral, S., 'The Spread of True and False News Online', *Science*, vol. 359, no. 6380, March 2018.
2. Valgarðsson, V., et al., 'A Crisis of Political Trust?', *British Journal of Political Science*, 2025. OSN architecture: The Visible World, Chapter 8.

Pillar 9 – Evolutionary League

The founding agreement

The problem

Every institution in history has faced the same internal risk: it solves the problem it was designed for, and then — through the accumulation of habit, self-interest, and organisational inertia — begins to serve its own continuation rather than its original purpose. Movements for reform become establishments. Regulators become aligned with the industries they regulate. Institutions designed to protect the public become the most reliable defenders of the status quo. This is not a failure of individuals. It is a structural tendency of institutions that have no honest self-examination mechanism built into their architecture from the outset.¹

Commons World is not immune to this tendency. An architecture designed to make power accountable can itself become a centre of unaccountable power if left without the means to examine and correct itself honestly. The Evolutionary League exists because its founder understood this — and built the most demanding internal critic of Commons World into the architecture itself, from the beginning, as one of its nine Pillars.

What it does

The Evolutionary League (EL) is simultaneously the founding agreement that gives every other Pillar its legitimacy, and the most demanding internal critic that ensures every Pillar remains worthy of it. Without the collective agreement of its founding cohort — the initial group of nations, cities, cooperatives, institutions, and communities whose participation makes the Commons World economy real — the currency has no economy, the baseline

framework has no binding authority, and verified findings carry weight only where institutions choose to accept them. The agreement precedes the currency. Always.

The League performs four functions: **Forward Detection** — continuously monitoring emerging developments across the twelve priority challenges for signals requiring Commons World to adapt; **Institutional Adaptation Review** — a formal public process through which any Pillar no longer working as intended is examined, with all submissions deposited permanently in the Registry; **Constitutional Review** — a periodic examination of whether the Nine Principles and overall architecture remain fit for purpose, on a maximum cycle of ten years; and the **Founding Agreement** itself — the collective commitment that makes the economy real and gives every other institution its legitimacy.

What changes

When an institution is designed, from its founding, to examine itself honestly and adapt — when the people within it are selected for their willingness to say *this is not working*, rather than their willingness to perpetuate what exists — the relationship between institution and purpose can remain honest across generations rather than decades. The Evolutionary League is the part of Commons World that exists to ensure Commons World never becomes the thing it was designed to prevent. That is not a small ambition. It may be the most important one.

*Every institution eventually serves itself
unless it is designed not to.*

*The willingness to be wrong — and to say so publicly —
is the rarest and most necessary form of institutional courage.*

It is also available to each of us, every day.

🧘 *Sit quietly. Take a few slow breaths and let the body settle.*

Bring to mind something you once believed firmly — a view, an assumption, a way of understanding something — that you later revised when you encountered better evidence or a perspective you had not previously considered. Notice what that revision required. Not the moment of new understanding, but the moment just before it — the willingness to hold your existing view lightly enough that new information could reach you.

That capacity — to be genuinely open to being wrong, without losing your sense of who you are — is the foundation of learning and of trust. What would it mean to bring this quality into your Commons Community? To hold the ideas discussed here not as fixed beliefs to be defended, but as a developing understanding to be tested, refined, and improved by every conversation? Rest in that openness for a moment. Then carry it into everything that follows.

SOURCES – PILLAR 9

1. Olson, M., *The Logic of Collective Action*, Harvard University Press, 1965; Michels, R., *Political Parties*, 1911 — the ‘iron law of oligarchy’.
2. EL architecture, four functions, founding cohort: *The Visible World*, Chapter 9.

The nine Pillars together

Each of the nine Pillars addresses a different dimension of the same underlying condition: the absence of the architecture through which people can see clearly, contribute meaningfully, and hold institutions honestly to account. None of them is sufficient alone. Planetary Coherence & Health provides the foundation. The Commons Registry provides the memory. The Alliance for Transparent Enterprise provides the verification. The Global Accountability Rating provides the translation. Commons Bank and the Commons Unit of Exchange provide the economic recognition. AURA provides the sovereign digital environment. Commons Education provides the capability to navigate it all. The One Story Network provides the shared reality without which none of it can be discussed honestly. And the Evolutionary League provides the founding agreement and the honest self-examination that keeps the whole architecture trustworthy across time.

Together they are one architecture. And the Commons Community is where that architecture meets the street you live on.

Nine Pillars. One architecture. One purpose.

*To make the world visible enough
that the people who inhabit it
can finally shape it.*



PART FIVE

The twelve priority challenges

*Not twelve separate crises. Twelve views of one condition
— and one condition has one cure.*

The nine Pillars are an architecture — an answer to a set of problems. Part Five names those problems directly: twelve domains where the gap between what humanity knows and what it does is widest, the consequences most serious, and the window for meaningful change most time-sensitive.

These are not twelve separate crises. They are twelve expressions of the same underlying condition described in Part One — systems built to concentrate power and externalise cost. Read individually, each challenge is sobering. Read together, they reveal a pattern — and in that pattern, a possibility. If one set of structural choices produced all twelve, a different set of structural choices can begin to address all twelve. Not sequentially. Simultaneously.

Each of the twelve entries that follows is designed for use in a meeting. One challenge per meeting is the recommended approach — depth over breadth. Read the entry aloud to open. Move through Inner Being together. Then discuss. For those who want to go deeper,

each challenge becomes a full chapter in *The Hidden World*, and a Spotlight essay with verified sources in *The Visible World*. What follows here is the seed of each challenge — enough to feel its weight and open a real conversation.

*These are not twelve separate crises.
They are twelve views of one condition —
and one condition has one cure.*

TPC 1 — Ecological overshoot

Planetary systems exceeding safe operating limits.

The reality

Seven of the nine planetary boundaries identified by Earth-system science have now been breached — the safe limits within which human civilisation developed.¹ Earth Overshoot Day in 2025 fell on 24 July, the earliest ever recorded. Humanity is currently using the equivalent of 1.8 Earths, drawing down natural capital faster than it can be regenerated. The living world is not an inexhaustible resource. It is a system with limits — and we have exceeded them.

Why it persists

The economy registers ecological depletion as growth. There is no balance sheet on which the planet's losses appear as costs — so the decision-makers responsible for them face no financial consequence for exceeding limits that every Earth-system scientist can measure.

What you can do

Know your own ecological footprint. Support businesses and practices that restore rather than deplete. Join or start a local ecological restoration initiative. Use the accountability rating to verify the environmental claims of any organisation you buy from.

🌱 *Close your eyes for a moment. Feel the ground beneath you — solid, ancient, patient. This ground has sustained life for billions of years. It is sustaining you right now. Breathe in the awareness that you are part of a living system — not separate from it, but part of it. Carry the question into your conversation: what does it mean to live within limits — not as deprivation, but as respect?*

COMMUNITY DISCUSSION

Where in your daily life do you feel the effects of ecological overshoot — and where do you feel most able to respond to it?

TPC 2 — Food system fragility

Supply-chain concentration, soil degradation, water stress.

The reality

Four crops — rice, wheat, maize, and soybeans — provide close to half of all calories consumed worldwide. Around 60% of global food production comes from just five countries.² The UN Food and Agriculture Organization estimates that 52% of the world's soils are already degraded. In 2025, 266 million people across 47 countries faced high levels of acute food insecurity.³ A system feeding eight billion people rests on a remarkably small number of places, crops, and growing seasons — and the soil beneath it is deteriorating.

Why it persists

Food production has been optimised for efficiency over resilience. Efficiency removes redundancy — and redundancy is what allows a system to absorb a shock without that shock cascading. The soil beneath this system is treated as a substrate to be amended, not a living system to be sustained.

What you can do

Buy from local and regenerative food producers where possible. Support initiatives that restore soil health. Ask where your food comes from and how it was grown. Every food choice is a vote for the kind of food system that continues to exist.

☛ *Take a breath and bring your attention to your body. You are alive right now because something grew in soil, somewhere, and made its way to you. Sit with that — the quiet miracle of a chain of living systems that sustains your life every day. Now ask yourself gently: do you know that chain? You don't need to feel guilty. You need to feel curious. Carry that curiosity into the conversation that follows.*

COMMUNITY DISCUSSION

What would it mean for your community to be meaningfully food-sovereign — less dependent on supply chains you cannot see or influence?

TPC 3 – Water security

Freshwater availability, access equity, contamination.

The reality

Only about 0.5% of Earth's water is accessible for human use.⁴ A global assessment found that 71% of the world's major aquifers are in decline, with 30% depleting rapidly.⁵ In January 2026, the United Nations University declared that the world had entered an era of 'water bankruptcy' — irreversible damage in multiple river basins and aquifers.⁶ One in four people globally lacks access to safely managed drinking water. Some of these aquifers took thousands of years to fill. None can be refilled on any timescale that matters to the people currently drawing from them.

Why it persists

Unlike climate change and biodiversity, water has no comprehensive global governance framework — no treaty, no binding targets, no single body with a mandate to assess global water security. Water is priced, almost everywhere, by the cost of moving it — not by the cost of its depletion.

What you can do

Understand where your water comes from and the state of that source. Reduce consumption where you have a genuine choice. Support organisations working on water access and aquifer restoration. Advocate locally for water governance that reflects the true cost of depletion.

✦ Sit quietly and become aware of the water in your body — roughly 60% of you, right now. Water that fell as rain, flowed through rivers, seeped through soil, was drawn up by roots, consumed, filtered, and returned to the cycle, again and again, across geological time. You are part of the water cycle. Not a user of it. Part of it. Carry into the conversation the question: what would it mean to treat water not as a commodity, but as the living commons it has always been?

COMMUNITY DISCUSSION

Does your community know the state of its local water sources — and who is responsible for protecting them?

TPC 4 — Energy transition

Decarbonisation pace, energy access, grid resilience.

The reality

Coal, oil, and natural gas are compressed ancient sunlight — solar energy captured by plants and marine organisms over hundreds of millions of years, extracted and burned within centuries. In 2024, fossil fuels supplied 86.6% of global primary energy.⁷ Yet solar electricity now costs an average of 41% less than the lowest-cost fossil-fuel alternative, and onshore wind 53% less.⁸ The argument that fossil fuels remain necessary because alternatives are too expensive is no longer accurate. What sustains them is approximately \$7 trillion in annual subsidies — equivalent to \$13 million every minute.⁹

Why it persists

The people and institutions that benefit most from fossil-fuel subsidies are also those most positioned to influence the regulatory frameworks, political systems, and information environments that determine whether those subsidies continue. The leverage is structural, not conspiratorial.

What you can do

Know your energy provider and what it is powered by. Switch if you can. Support community energy initiatives. Understand that \$7 trillion in annual subsidies is a political choice — made by identifiable institutions, on behalf of identifiable interests — and that political choices can change.

☞ *Take a slow breath and consider: the energy moving through your body right now came, ultimately, from the sun. Everything alive runs on solar energy. The fossil fuels we burn are solar energy too — stored over hundreds of millions of years. We are spending in centuries what took the planet an unimaginable span of time to accumulate. Sit with that scale for a moment. Not with guilt. With perspective. Carry into the conversation the question: what would it mean to live within the energy budget of a single year's sunlight — as every other living system on Earth already does?*

COMMUNITY DISCUSSION

What would it take for your community to generate a meaningful share of its own energy — and who would benefit most if it did?

SOURCES — TPC 1-4

1. Planetary Health Check 2025, Potsdam Institute / Stockholm Resilience Centre. Earth Overshoot Day: Global Footprint Network, 2025.
2. FAO, cited in 'The Fragile Link', 2024; FAO AQUASTAT — 52% of soils degraded.
3. Global Network Against Food Crises, 2026 Global Report on Food Crises — 266 million people across 47 countries.
4. USGS, 2025 — 0.5% of Earth's water accessible.
5. Gleeson, T., et al., 2023 — 71% of major aquifers in decline, 30% rapidly depleting.
6. UNU-INWEH, report on global water bankruptcy, January 2026.
7. Energy Institute, Statistical Review of World Energy 2025 — fossil fuels 86.6% of primary energy in 2024.
8. IRENA, Renewable Power Generation Costs in 2024 — solar 41% cheaper, wind 53% cheaper.
9. IMF, Fossil Fuel Subsidies Data: 2023 Update — ~\$7 trillion annually (\$13 million per minute).

TPC 5 — Human health and wellbeing

Pandemic preparedness, mental health, healthcare access.

The reality

More than half of humanity — an estimated 4.6 billion people — lacks access to essential health services.¹ Non-communicable diseases kill more than 43 million people every year, the largest cause of global death — one person under seventy every two seconds.² Mental-health conditions affect over one billion people worldwide, yet 91% of people living with depression cannot access care.³ Global pandemic-preparedness funding remains more than \$10 billion short of what is needed annually — a gap that persists not because the cost is unknown, but because preparedness spending competes against immediate demands that always seem more urgent.⁴

Why it persists

Health systems worldwide were built primarily around acute, infectious episodes — conditions with a clear onset and a defined treatment. Chronic conditions and mental health, which now drive the majority of global disease burden, require a different kind of system: ongoing, relational, and rarely amenable to the large-scale campaigns that drove progress against infectious disease. Funding has not followed the burden.

What you can do

Know the state of healthcare access in your community. Support mental-health destigmatisation actively. Advocate for local pandemic-preparedness investment. Recognise that your own health — physical and mental — is a form of sovereignty, and invest in it accordingly.

✿ Take a slow breath and bring your attention to this body — breathing, sensing, alive. For a moment, simply appreciate the extraordinary fact of being a living organism, sustaining itself. Now extend that appreciation outward — to everyone in this room, and then beyond, to the 4.6 billion people who right now cannot access the care that would keep them well. Not with guilt. With proportion. And with the question: what does a world look like in which every person's health is treated as the foundation of everything else, not as a cost to be managed?

COMMUNITY DISCUSSION

Who in your community lacks access to essential health care — and what would it take to change that?

TPC 6 – Human consciousness and mental resilience

Attention, discernment, inner capability.

The reality

In 2004, research found that the average person spent two and a half minutes on a single screen before switching. By 2020, across five replicated studies, that figure had fallen to between 44 and 50 seconds.⁵ After an interruption, it takes an average of over 23 minutes to fully regain the depth of focus that existed before it.⁶ The platforms that have produced this fragmentation are not neutral tools — they are systems optimised, by design, to capture and re-capture attention as frequently as possible, because each recapture generates data and advertising revenue. The capacity being eroded is the same capacity required to see the patterns described throughout this booklet.

Why it persists

The fragmentation of human attention is not a side effect of the dominant platform business model. It is the business model. An attention span of under a minute, interrupted and recaptured dozens of times a day, generates far more advertising impressions than sustained focus ever could. The cost — to discernment, to civic capacity, to the inner life — is externalised onto the people whose attention is being harvested.

What you can do

Practise deliberate attention daily — even five minutes of sustained focus on one thing. Notice which platforms and habits fragment your attention and which sustain it. Choose accordingly. Teach children

what attention is and why it matters, before the platforms teach them otherwise.

• Without picking up your phone, without checking anything — simply sit. For sixty seconds, give your full attention to your breath. Not controlling it. Simply feeling it. If your mind wanders — and it will — gently return. Without judgment. This is the practice. Not the perfection of it. The returning. This capacity — to return, deliberately, to what you chose to attend to — is the foundation of everything else in this booklet. It can be cultivated. It begins now.

COMMUNITY DISCUSSION

How has your own capacity for sustained attention changed over the past five years — and what, if anything, have you done about it?

TPC 7 — Education for a changing world

Relevance, access, AI disruption.

The reality

After three years of schooling, more than 90% of students in low- and middle-income countries cannot read at the level expected for their grade.⁷ The World Bank estimates the generation most affected by recent learning disruption risks losing \$21 trillion in lifetime earnings — 17% of current global GDP.⁸ Simultaneously, the World Economic Forum projects that structural change, much of it driven by artificial intelligence, will displace 92 million jobs globally while creating 170 million new ones.⁹ The new jobs are not necessarily available to the people whose jobs are displaced, in the places where they live, on the timeline they need. International aid to education fell by 12% in 2024 — at precisely the moment both crises are accelerating.¹⁰

Why it persists

The dominant model of education was designed for an industrial economy that no longer exists. It transmits information in a world where information is free. It prepares students for stable roles in an economy that artificial intelligence is restructuring faster than curriculum committees can meet. The system is not failing. It is succeeding at something that is no longer what is needed.

What you can do

Support free, open, lifelong learning in your community. Prioritise discernment — the capacity to evaluate information — over information itself, in how you learn and how you support others to learn. Recognise that education is not something that ends. It is something you are doing right now, in this room.

✦ Think of the most important thing you have learned in the past year. Not from a classroom. From life — from a conversation, a mistake, a book, an observation. Notice that it came to you not because someone scheduled it, but because you were open to it. That openness — the quality of being genuinely available to learn, at any age, from any source — is the most valuable educational capability there is. And it cannot be taught. It can only be chosen. You are choosing it right now.

COMMUNITY DISCUSSION

What would education look like in your community if its primary goal were discernment — the capacity to think — rather than the transmission of information?

TPC 8 — Governance and institutional trust

Democratic erosion, capture, legitimacy.

The reality

The largest study of political trust ever conducted — 3,377 surveys, more than five million respondents, across 143 countries between 1958 and 2019 — found that trust in parliaments declined by an average of 8.4 percentage points across democracies since 1990.¹¹

Trust in non-representative institutions — police, civil services, courts — did not follow the same trajectory; trust in police rose by approximately 12.5 percentage points over the same period.

Transparency International's 2024 Corruption Perceptions Index found that more than two-thirds of the 182 countries assessed scored below 50 out of 100 for public-sector integrity.¹² The crisis is not a crisis of institutions in general. It is concentrated specifically in the institutions whose role is to represent citizens through elections.

Why it persists

The institutions losing trust fastest are the ones where the gap between formal accountability moments is longest — where the most consequential conduct occurs between elections, invisible to most citizens. Trust tracks visibility. The institutions people trust most are those whose conduct they can observe continuously. The institutions they trust least are those they can only evaluate every four or five years.

What you can do

Know what your elected representatives have committed to — and track what they do. Deposit your observations where they can be permanently seen. Support independent journalism. Recognise that

every public commitment made by a person in power, and every verified gap between that commitment and what followed, is information that belongs in the permanent record.

👉 *Bring to mind a public figure — local, national, or international — whose decisions affect your life. Without anger or judgment, simply ask: do you know what they have committed to? Do you know what they have done? Do you know the gap between the two? For most of us, for most public figures, the honest answer is: not really. Not because we don't care. Because the information is not organised in a way that makes it easy to see. Rest in the recognition that this is a design problem, not a personal failing. And carry into the conversation the question: what would change if every public commitment, and everything that followed it, was simply always visible?*

COMMUNITY DISCUSSION

What public commitment made by an elected representative in your community do you most want to track — and how would you do it if the tools existed?

SOURCES — TPC 5-8

1. WHO and World Bank, Tracking Universal Health Coverage: 2025 Global Monitoring Report — 4.6 billion lacking essential health services.
2. UN Secretary-General, High-Level Meeting on NCDs and Mental Health, 2025 — 43 million NCD deaths annually.
3. World Health Organization, World Mental Health Today, 2025 — over one billion affected; 91% with depression unable to access care.
4. World Bank, 2024, cited in 'Top 10 Public Health Challenges in 2025' — preparedness shortfall exceeding \$10 billion annually.
5. Mark, G., Attention Span, 2023 — screen attention span falling from 2.5 minutes (2004) to 44–50 seconds.

6. Mark, G., et al., 'The Cost of Interrupted Work', ACM CHI, 2008 — 23+ minutes to regain focus.
7. World Bank, Effective Reading Instruction in LMICs, October 2025.
8. World Bank/UNESCO/UNICEF, State of Global Learning Poverty: 2022 Update — \$21 trillion projected lifetime earnings loss.
9. World Economic Forum, Future of Jobs Report 2025.
10. UNESCO, December 2025 — 12% decline in international education aid in 2024.
11. Valgarðsson, V., et al., British Journal of Political Science, 2025 — parliament trust -8.4pp, police +12.5pp since 1990.
12. Transparency International, Corruption Perceptions Index 2025 — more than two-thirds of 182 countries below 50/100.

TPC 9 — Economic alignment

Wealth concentration, contribution invisibility, financial exclusion.

The reality

In 2025, global billionaire wealth reached \$18.3 trillion — growing three times faster than the previous five-year average.¹ The twelve richest individuals on Earth now hold more wealth than the entire bottom half of humanity combined. Women perform an estimated 12.5 billion hours of unpaid care work every day — valued at more than \$10.8 trillion annually, over three times the size of the global technology sector — and none of it appears in any national account.² As of 2025, 1.3 billion adults worldwide remain entirely outside the formal financial system.³

Why it persists

The economic systems that measure value were built to register transactions, not contributions. Work that passes through a formal financial exchange is counted. Work that sustains the people doing the exchanging — care, restoration, community stewardship — is invisible by design. The people best positioned to change this are also those whose wealth depends on it remaining unchanged.

What you can do

Know where your money goes and what it funds. Support businesses that pay fairly and contribute to their communities. Recognise the economic value of unpaid care and contribution in your own life and the lives of those around you. Understand that financial exclusion is a design choice — and advocate for its redesign.

✎ *Think of someone whose work sustains your life — a carer, a grower, a cleaner, a community volunteer — whose contribution the economy does not pay for, or pays poorly. Sit with the reality of that contribution: the hours, the skill, the care that goes into it. Now ask: does the world we have built reflect the value of what that person does? Not with bitterness. With clarity. And carry into the conversation the question: what would an economy look like if it could see — and reward — the work it currently cannot?*

COMMUNITY DISCUSSION

Whose contribution in your community is economically invisible — and what would change if it were recognised and rewarded?

TPC 10 – Technology and human agency

AI governance, digital sovereignty, automation.

The reality

As of 2023, 2.6 billion people — close to a third of humanity — are not connected to the internet at all.⁴ Of those who are, access to the technology now reshaping the global economy is deeply unequal: high-income countries host 86% of the world's top 500 supercomputers and 77% of global data-centre capacity.⁵ The United States alone created 62% of the world's notable AI models and captured more than 73% of global AI start-up funding. Africa and Latin America together account for just 3% of global AI computing capacity.⁶ The technology projected to create 170 million new jobs is concentrated in the places least likely to share those jobs with the people most in need of them.

Why it persists

Building AI infrastructure requires reliable large-scale electricity, advanced semiconductor supply chains, and specialised chips that can cost \$30,000 to \$40,000 each.⁶ The countries with the capital to build this infrastructure capture the returns it generates — and the gap between them and those without widens with each iteration. It is a self-reinforcing cycle, and it is accelerating.

What you can do

Understand which AI tools you use, who built them, and what data they are trained on. Support open-source and community-owned digital infrastructure. Advocate for digital sovereignty — the right of communities and nations to own and govern their own digital

systems. Recognise that the digital tools you choose are votes for the kind of digital world that continues to be built.

✎ *For a moment, consider the digital tools you used today. Where were they built? Who owns them? What do they know about you as a result of your using them? Not with anxiety. With honest curiosity. Now imagine a different kind of tool — one built to serve you rather than to learn from you. One whose business model is your sovereignty rather than your data. Notice what it feels like to imagine that. The quiet relief of a tool that is simply on your side. That is not a fantasy. It is a design choice. And design choices can be made differently.*

COMMUNITY DISCUSSION

What digital tools does your community depend on — and who owns and governs them? What would community digital sovereignty look like here?

TPC 11 – Conflict and polarisation

Social cohesion, peacebuilding, information warfare.

The reality

Nearly 240,000 people were killed in violent conflict events in 2024 — a 23% increase on the year before.⁷ Forced displacement reached a historic 122 million people by April 2025. The World Economic Forum’s Global Risks Report 2025 ranked state-based armed conflict as the single most pressing immediate global risk — and ranked misinformation and disinformation as the top short-term risk for the second consecutive year, explicitly linking the two.⁸ A 2018 study in *Science* found that false news spreads approximately six times faster than true news on social platforms.⁹

Why it persists

Conflict early warning is not a new field — researchers can anticipate where organised violence is likely to escalate with increasing accuracy. What the field describes as the ‘warning-response gap’ is the consistent finding that rigorous evidence does not reliably translate into preventive action, because the political will to act before a crisis becomes impossible to ignore is in chronically short supply. An information environment that rewards the emotionally amplified over the verified makes that political will harder to sustain.

What you can do

Verify before you share. Know the difference between a confirmed report and an unverified claim — and treat that difference as important. Support local peacebuilding and social-cohesion initiatives. Recognise that polarisation is not inevitable: it is, in

significant part, a product of information environments designed to generate it.

✎ *Think of someone whose views differ significantly from your own — on politics, on society, on what matters. Not someone whose actions have caused harm. Simply someone who sees the world differently. For a moment, without arguing with their position in your mind, try to imagine what experiences, what evidence, what genuine values might have led a reasonable person to hold that view. Notice what this requires: the effort to hold your own certainty lightly enough that another perspective can be considered. This is not agreement. It is the precondition of genuine conversation. And genuine conversation is the precondition of peace.*

COMMUNITY DISCUSSION

Where do you see polarisation operating in your community — and what, specifically, is it preventing people from seeing or doing together?

TPC 12 – Civilisational coherence

The capacity of human societies to learn, adapt, and remain whole.

The reality

The eleven challenges that precede this one are not eleven separate problems. Research published in *Global Sustainability* defines a global polycrisis as ‘the causal entanglement of crises in multiple global systems in ways that significantly degrade humanity’s prospects.’¹⁰ The defining feature is that the systems involved are now sufficiently interconnected that a disruption in one reliably reverberates into the others — producing impacts far greater than the sum of their parts and overwhelming governance models built around single issues.¹¹ In 2025, 266 million people across 47 countries faced high levels of acute food insecurity — driven not by a single cause but by the overlapping effects of conflict, climate, and economic shock arriving simultaneously in the same places.¹²

Why it persists

The institutions designed to address each of these domains were built in an era when they could reasonably be treated as separate. Each developed its own expertise, funding, and definition of success — appropriately, for the problems as they existed when those institutions were designed. What has changed is the connections between the problems. And institutions built around separation do not naturally develop the capacity to see, measure, or act on entanglement.

What you can do

See the pattern. The Commons Community is itself an act of civilisational coherence — a small community choosing to understand

the connections rather than the categories, and to act from that understanding locally. Share what you see. Build the network. Trust that a population that can see a pattern clearly, together, at scale, and permanently, is a population that has already begun to change it.

✦ *Take a long, slow breath. You have just moved through eleven challenges — ecological, economic, informational, institutional, human. Notice what that feels like. Not despair. Something more complex — the weight of understanding, held alongside the knowledge that you chose to be here, in this room, looking at this together. In a world designed to keep these things invisible, fragmented, and overwhelming, choosing to see them clearly — together, in community, with honesty and without panic — is itself a form of resistance. Not the loudest form. The most durable one.*

COMMUNITY DISCUSSION

Looking across all twelve challenges — what pattern do you see? And what is the one thing your Commons Community could do, starting now, that addresses that pattern rather than just one of its expressions?

SOURCES – TPC 9-12

1. Oxfam International, January 2026 — \$18.3 trillion billionaire wealth; twelve richest vs. poorest half of humanity.
2. Oxfam International, 'Time to Care', 2020 — 12.5 billion hours of unpaid care work daily, valued at \$10.8 trillion.
3. World Bank, Global Findex Database 2025 — 1.3 billion adults unbanked.
4. International Telecommunication Union, 2025 — 2.6 billion people unconnected.
5. World Bank, Digital Progress and Trends Report 2025 — supercomputer, data-centre, and AI-funding shares.

6. Brookings Institution, 'How to Bridge the Global AI Divide', 2026 — chip costs; Africa & Latin America's 3% share of AI compute.
7. IISS, Armed Conflict Survey 2025 — ~240,000 conflict deaths in 2024; 122 million displaced.
8. World Economic Forum, Global Risks Report 2025.
9. Vosoughi, S., Roy, D., and Aral, S., *Science*, March 2018 — false news spreads six times faster.
10. Lawrence, M., et al., 'Global Polycrisis', *Global Sustainability*, Cambridge University Press, 2024.
11. IIASA, 'Polycrisis, Systemic Risk, and Resilience', November 2025.
12. Global Network Against Food Crises, 2026 Global Report on Food Crises.

A closing note

Twelve domains. Twelve measurement systems. One pattern.

The gap between what is known and what is done is not a gap in knowledge. It is a gap in visibility — and in the courage that comes from seeing clearly, in community, without looking away. That gap is what the Commons Community exists to close. Not everywhere at once. Here, first. With the people in this room. And then, through every connection this room makes with every other room like it, everywhere.

The world does not lack solutions.

*It lacks the architecture through which enough people
can see, clearly and together, what is actually happening
and what each of us can do about it.*

You are that architecture.

This room is where it begins.



REFERENCE

Glossary

Key terms and acronyms used in this booklet. Fuller definitions appear in the Glossary of The Visible World.

Commons World and its institutions

Commons World (CW) — an open civilisational framework designed to restore sovereignty — to people, communities, and the living world — by making consequence, evidence, accountability, stewardship, contribution, and participation permanently visible.

Commons Community (CC) — a self-forming local group that meets regularly to understand the Commons World framework and to decide together what its members can do about it where they live. No dues, no hierarchy, no central organisation.

The Hidden World — the free companion ebook, which expands each of the twelve priority challenges into a full chapter of cases, named actors, exact laws, and the repair each would require. Available at commonsworld.org.

The Visible World — the founding book of Commons World by Mohan Lal Mahtani; the complete architecture and evidence base, in print 2027.

Prime Directive — the foundational ethical commitment of Commons World: Do No Harm — to any living being, human, animal, or creature of the living world, or to Gaia, the living system that sustains all life.

The nine Pillars

PCH – Planetary Coherence & Health — Pillar 1. Establishes the Prime Directive, Nine Principles, Six Baseline Domains, and Six Governing Bodies through which coherence is defined and measured.

CR – Commons Registry — Pillar 2. The permanent distributed public record in which verified findings, public commitments, and institutional conduct are deposited and preserved.

ATE – Alliance for Transparent Enterprise — Pillar 3. The independent investigation institution that examines what organisations actually do and deposits its findings in the Registry. The sole authority to verify and authorise deposit of evidence.

GAR – Global Accountability Rating — Pillar 4. Translates verified findings into a single seven-colour signal visible at the point of decision.

CB – Commons Bank — Pillar 5. The sovereign financial institution of Commons World, providing financial services without the barriers that exclude 1.3 billion people from conventional banking.

CUE – Commons Unit of Exchange — Pillar 5. The sovereign currency, issued exclusively upon independent verification of a measurable contribution to human or ecological wellbeing. Contribution precedes recognition. Always.

AURA – Autonomous Unified Rights Architecture — Pillar 6. A sovereign digital device and environment through which individuals communicate, learn, verify, and participate while retaining full sovereignty over their identity and data.

CE – Commons Education — Pillar 7. Comprising Commons Academy for professional practitioners and Commons Learning, a

free universal lifelong learning platform built around the development of discernment.

OSN – One Story Network — Pillar 8. The information network comprising Commons News (professional journalism) and People’s News (citizen evidence), governed by verification before amplification.

EL – Evolutionary League — Pillar 9. The founding agreement that gives every other Pillar its legitimacy, and the institution that keeps Commons World worthy of it through forward detection, adaptation review, and constitutional review.

Key concepts

Baseline Domains — the six measurement areas of PCH against which all Commons World institutions, enterprises, and policies are evaluated: human flourishing; ecological integrity; material & technological safety; social cohesion & participation; systemic resilience; intergenerational stewardship.

Six Audit Domains — the six areas the Alliance for Transparent Enterprise examines in any organisation: human flourishing; ecological integrity; material & technological safety; ownership & financial accountability; systemic resilience; intergenerational stewardship.

Ceiling Rule — prevents any product’s rating from exceeding its parent enterprise’s overall rating by more than one level, closing the greenwashing loophole. Applied in reverse to individuals: an official’s rating cannot exceed that of the institution they preside over.

Contribution precedes recognition — the founding principle of CUE. Economic recognition is issued only after a measurable contribution has been independently verified and recorded. Intention and self-certification do not qualify.

Correction & Restoration Protocol — the mechanism by which verified Registry records are supplemented by new evidence, exonerations, and corrections, permanently linked to the original

entry with equal prominence. Original entries remain visible, so the record cannot be managed retrospectively.

GAR colours — Red (active verified harm), Orange (verified gaps, not engaged), Yellow (Upgrade Pathway entered), Green (full alignment — the baseline threshold), Blue (Green plus regenerative contribution), Violet (Blue sustained across three cycles), White (Exemplary — awarded rarely, cannot be applied for).

Liar's Dividend — the condition in which convincing fabricated content allows genuine content to be dismissed as fabricated. Monitored by the Evolutionary League.

Sovereignty — not a legal status conferred from above. A capacity that exists whether or not it has been exercised — in economic, political, digital, ecological, and informational life.

Upgrade Pathway — the ATE process through which organisations with adverse findings demonstrate measurable improvement through independently verified corrective action. Improvement is not claimed — it is demonstrated.

Verification before amplification — the governing principle of OSN. Every piece of content carries a permanent visible status marker: Verified, Partially Verified, Unresolved, Disputed, Evolving, or Insufficiently Substantiated.



PART SIX

Questions & answers

Not a test. A conversation starter for every meeting.

Many questions have more than one valid answer.

These questions are not a test. They are a conversation starter. Many have more than one valid answer; where that is the case, the suggested answer is offered as one possible response, not the only one. The facilitator's role is simply to ensure every voice in the room is heard. Questions marked **(F)** invite factual answers; questions marked **(R)** are reflective, with many valid responses.

Questions – the nine Pillars

Q1. (F) State the Prime Directive of Commons World in full.

Q2. (F) How many Baseline Domains does PCH establish — and can you name them?

Q3. (F) What is the role of the Global Commons Advocacy Council?

Q4. (R) Principle 4 states that the polluter bears the cost. In your daily life, where do you see costs being externalised onto others or onto the environment?

- Q5. (R)** What does digital sovereignty mean to you in practical terms?
- Q6. (R)** Which of the six baseline domains do you feel is most neglected in your community — and why?
- Q7. (F)** What makes the Commons Registry different from a conventional database or public record?
- Q8. (F)** What kinds of information about senior officials does the Registry record — and what does it deliberately not record?
- Q9. (F)** What is the Correction & Restoration Protocol — and why does it matter that original entries remain visible?
- Q10. (R)** If every public commitment made by your local representatives were permanently recorded and visible, what do you think would change?
- Q11. (F)** Who commissions ATE investigations — and why does that matter?
- Q12. (F)** What are the Six Audit Domains, and what does each examine?
- Q13. (F)** What is the Upgrade Pathway, and how does it work?
- Q14. (R)** Most corporate harm is legal. What does this tell us about the relationship between law and ethics — and what role does independent verification play?
- Q15. (F)** What do the seven GAR colours represent, from Red to White?
- Q16. (F)** What is the Ceiling Rule, and why does it exist?
- Q17. (R)** Green is the baseline threshold of responsible participation — not extraordinary achievement. Does that standard feel high or low to you, given how most enterprises currently operate?
- Q18. (F)** What is CUE, and how is it issued?
- Q19. (F)** What does ‘contribution precedes recognition’ mean in practice?
- Q20. (R)** What contribution do you make — paid or unpaid — that you feel deserves recognition the current economy does not provide?

Q21. (F) What makes AURA fundamentally different from a conventional smartphone?

Q22. (R) You agreed to the terms and conditions of your most-used digital service. Did you read them? Would you have agreed if you had?

Q23. (F) What is the difference between Commons Academy and Commons Learning?

Q24. (F) What is the Commons Method of Inquiry — and what are its six questions?

Q25. (R) What is one thing you wish you had been taught in school that would have made the most difference to your capacity to navigate the world?

Q26. (F) What are the six verification status markers used by OSN — and what does each mean?

Q27. (F) Who verifies citizen-submitted evidence before it is deposited in the Registry — and why is this distinction important?

Q28. (R) OSN uses architecture rather than censorship to distinguish the verified from the unverified. What is the difference — and why does it matter?

Q29. (F) What are the four functions of the Evolutionary League?

Q30. (F) Why does the founding agreement precede the currency — and what happens to CUE without it?

Q31. (R) The Liar's Dividend lets convincing fabricated content cause genuine content to be dismissed as fake. Where do you see this operating in your information environment today?

Questions – the twelve challenges

One question per challenge, all reflective — designed to open a discussion rather than test knowledge.

Q32. (R) Ecological overshoot: seven of nine planetary boundaries have been breached. If you had to explain this to a ten-year-old without scientific terminology, what would you say?

Q33. (R) Food-system fragility: four crops provide close to half of all global calories. What does this concentration mean for the resilience of the food system in your region?

Q34. (R) Water security: some aquifers cannot be refilled in a human lifetime. What decisions being made today in your community will your grandchildren inherit?

Q35. (R) Energy transition: fossil fuels receive ~\$7 trillion in annual subsidies. If those were redirected to the alternatives that are already cheaper, what would change first?

Q36. (R) Human health: 91% of people with depression globally cannot access care. What would a community that treated mental health as a genuine public priority look like — and how different is that from where you live?

Q37. (R) Attention: the average screen attention span has fallen from two and a half minutes to under fifty seconds. What has this cost you personally — and what could you do about it?

Q38. (R) Education: the system was designed for an economy that no longer exists. What one change would make the biggest difference to the next generation?

Q39. (R) Governance: trust in parliaments has declined while trust in non-representative institutions has risen. What does this asymmetry tell us about what people want from institutions?

Q40. (R) Economic alignment: if the economy counted unpaid care, ecological restoration, and community stewardship, what would the GDP

of your community look like — and who would be its most valuable contributors?

Q41. (R) Technology: Africa and Latin America together account for 3% of global AI computing capacity. What are the long-term consequences of this concentration — and who has the power to change it?

Q42. (R) Conflict: false news spreads six times faster than true news. Where do you see this dynamic in your community — and what has it prevented people from doing together?

Q43. (R) Civilisational coherence: looking across all twelve challenges — what single pattern runs through them all? And what is the most important thing your Commons Community could do to address that pattern?

Suggested answers

One possible answer for each factual question, offered as a starting point. Reflective questions are for discussion; no single answer is provided.

A1. Do No Harm — to any living being, human, animal, or creature of the living world, or to Gaia, the living system that sustains all life. Not a slogan but a structural requirement built into every institution in Commons World.

A2. Six Baseline Domains: human flourishing; ecological integrity; material & technological safety; social cohesion & participation; systemic resilience; intergenerational stewardship.

A3. It translates accumulated ATE findings and Registry records into structured legal and regulatory reform recommendations and advocates for their adoption — addressing the gap ATE consistently reveals: the harm was legal.

A7. It is maintained across thousands of independently operated servers so no single institution can alter, erase, or control it. Findings are deposited immediately upon verification and cannot be delayed for reputation management. The record is permanent, public, and correctable — new evidence is linked to original entries.

A8. It records the public role of senior officials — commitments made, decisions taken, verified consequences. It does not record private life, personal health, or family, unless these directly constitute a matter of public interest.

A9. The Correction & Restoration Protocol lets verified records be supplemented by new evidence, exonerations, and corrections, permanently linked to the original with equal prominence. Originals remain visible because removing them would let the record be managed retrospectively.

A11. No single institution commissions ATE investigations — it operates independently, not on behalf of any government, enterprise, or interest group. That independence gives its findings their weight and prevents capture by the interests it investigates.

A12. Human flourishing; ecological integrity; material & technological safety; ownership & financial accountability; systemic resilience; intergenerational stewardship — each examining whether an organisation's activities expand or diminish that condition.

A13. The route through which organisations with adverse findings demonstrate measurable improvement via independently verified corrective action; milestones, timelines, and progress are permanently visible. Improvement is demonstrated, not claimed.

A15. Red (active verified harm); Orange (verified gaps, not engaged); Yellow (Upgrade Pathway entered); Green (full alignment — the baseline); Blue (Green plus regenerative contribution); Violet (Blue sustained across three cycles); White (Exemplary, awarded rarely).

A16. It prevents a product's rating from exceeding the overall enterprise rating by more than one level, closing the greenwashing loophole — an enterprise cannot isolate one positive product from a negative overall record.

A18. CUE is the sovereign currency, issued exclusively by Commons Bank upon independent verification of a measurable contribution to human or ecological wellbeing, recorded permanently in the Registry. It cannot be mined, speculated upon, or created through debt.

A19. Economic recognition is issued only after a measurable contribution has been independently verified and recorded. Intention, promise, and self-certification do not qualify.

A21. AURA is a sovereign digital device and environment with twenty-four built-in capabilities. Unlike a conventional smartphone, its business model is not advertising or data harvesting — it serves its owner, who retains full sovereignty over identity and data.

A23. Commons Academy is the professional education and certification body training practitioners across all nine Pillars. Commons Learning is the universal, free, lifelong learning platform open to anyone, built around sixteen subjects and the development of discernment.

A24. (1) What exactly is the question? (2) What evidence is available? (3) Who produced it, and under what conditions? (4) What alternative explanations exist? (5) What conclusion is actually justified? (6) Am I willing to revise my view if better evidence emerges?

A26. Verified; Partially Verified; Unresolved; Disputed; Evolving; Insufficiently Substantiated — each marking the evidential status of a piece of content.

A27. ATE is the sole verification and authorisation authority. The chain is: citizen submits → ATE verifies → Registry records → OSN publishes. OSN publishes only what ATE has verified.

A29. Forward Detection; Institutional Adaptation Review; Constitutional Review (maximum ten-year cycle); and the Founding Agreement itself.

A30. Without the collective agreement of the founding cohort, CUE has no economy to operate in. The currency is only as real as the agreement to accept and use it. The agreement comes first — and is renewed through participation, not assumed.



PART SEVEN

Commons World and the new governance

*Decisions made by people insulated from their
consequences — and the architecture designed to make
that structurally impossible.*

The twelve challenges in Part Five have one pattern beneath them: decisions made by people insulated from their consequences, affecting people who had no say in making them. Part Seven turns from the pattern to the architecture designed to make it structurally impossible — and asks what the world looks like when that architecture works.

Two questions frame what follows. First: how does Commons World change the world once it is operational? Second: does a world shaped by CW still look like government as we know it? Both deserve a direct answer.



How Commons World changes the world

1. Reality becomes harder to falsify

THE REALITY

Every major governance failure of the past century depended on a gap between what was known inside institutions and what was visible to the public. Merck's internal data linked Vioxx to elevated heart attack risk years before the drug was withdrawn in 2004.¹ Frances Haugen's 2021 Senate testimony documented that Meta's own research confirmed Instagram's harm to teenage mental health — including eating disorders and suicidal thoughts — and that executives continued prioritising engagement over safety.² Goldman Sachs paid a \$550 million civil penalty after acknowledging its marketing materials for mortgage securities contained incomplete information about risks the firm knew it was accumulating.³ In each case the knowledge existed. The public record did not reflect it. And the gap between the two was maintained, deliberately, by the institutions that benefited from it.

WHY IT PERSISTS

No independent institution currently exists whose sole function is to verify what powerful institutions claim against what the evidence shows, and to make that assessment permanent, public, and impossible to selectively suppress. The institutions that nominally do this — regulators, audit bodies, parliamentary committees — are funded by governments, staffed partly by the industries they oversee, and subject to the same pressures as every other institution in the system.

WHAT CHANGES UNDER COMMONS WORLD

The Commons Registry (CR) is the tamper-resistant public ledger of verified reality. The Alliance for Transparent Enterprise (ATE) assesses what institutions claim against what the evidence shows, independently of those institutions. The Open Story Network (OSN) publishes only what has been verified. Together these three instruments create a public record that cannot be purchased, cannot be captured, and does not require a whistleblower to surface what is already known.

A corporation that asserts its product is safe, its supply chain is clean, its environmental record is compliant — must demonstrate that assertion to ATE's standard. The gap between the claim and the verified finding is public and permanent. The Global Accountability Rating (GAR) translates that consequence into a visible score on every institution operating within the CW framework. Dishonesty does not become impossible. It becomes consequential in a way it currently is not.

✎ *Think of a time when you discovered that something you had been told was not what it was.*

Not a personal deception — an institutional one. A product that did not do what it claimed. A policy that served different interests than it named.

Notice what came with the discovery. Not just the anger at the specific thing — the deeper erosion. The feeling that you cannot know what to trust.

Now consider: what would it mean to live in a world where the gap between what institutions claim and what they do is permanently, publicly visible? Not occasionally exposed. Structurally visible. By design.

Rest in that possibility for a moment before the conversation begins.

COMMUNITY DISCUSSION

Where in your daily life do you most feel the gap between what institutions claim and what they do? What would genuinely change if that gap were permanently, publicly visible?



2. Externalisation becomes unprofitable

THE REALITY

The business model behind most of the damage in Part Five is the same: extract value, move cost, capture the difference. A forest provides water regulation, carbon sequestration, and flood control — services estimated to be worth more than \$125 trillion annually at the

global level, larger than global GDP itself at the time of the calculation.⁴ The same forest logged, transported, and sold contributes positively to GDP at every stage. The accounting system registers the transactions following its destruction. It does not register the loss of what it was providing.

This is not illegal. In most jurisdictions it is not even unusual. It is the default logic of an economic system in which the atmosphere, the soil, the aquifer, and the psychological health of a platform's users have no account in the ledger. Costs that have no account cannot appear as liabilities. Liabilities that do not appear cannot affect a balance sheet. Balance sheets that do not reflect real costs cannot produce rational decisions about whether to continue causing them.

WHY IT PERSISTS

Existing accounting standards, tax frameworks, and regulatory systems were not designed to capture ecological and social costs. Reforming them requires the political will to impose costs on industries that have spent decades ensuring the political system reflects their interests rather than those of the people bearing their externalities. That will does not currently exist at the scale required.

WHAT CHANGES UNDER COMMONS WORLD

Commons Bank (CB) and the Commons Unit of Exchange (CUE) reprice what markets currently externalise — not by regulation that can be lobbied away, but by building the full cost into the exchange instrument itself. The atmosphere has an account. The aquifer has an account. Damage to them accumulates as a liability on the balance sheet of whoever caused it, visible in the CR record, reflected in the GAR score. The financial incentive that currently makes harm rational inverts. The extraction model does not become illegal. It becomes the least profitable option available — which, in a functioning market, is the condition under which it stops being the default choice.

✎ *Hold in your mind something you own, use, or consume regularly.*

A piece of clothing. A device. A food you buy every week.

Trace it back — just one step further than the shop. Who grew it, made it, assembled it. What land, what water, what labour.

Notice that you probably cannot trace it very far. The chain is opaque by design.

Now consider: what would change if every step in that chain were visible — and if the cost of every harm along it were reflected in what you paid?

Not as punishment. As accuracy.

COMMUNITY DISCUSSION

Which products or services in your daily life do you suspect carry hidden costs that their price does not reflect? What would honest pricing — pricing that includes those costs — change about how you live?



3. Immoral laws lose their durability

THE REALITY

As Part One of this booklet established (see Part One, Political Sovereignty), the preferences of average citizens have a near-zero statistical influence on policy outcomes in established democracies, while the preferences of economic elites and organised business interests have substantial independent influence.⁵ The mechanism is

not mystery. Three asymmetries maintain laws that serve the few at the cost of the many: financial, epistemic, and procedural.

Financial: since 2008, the fossil fuel industry alone has spent more than \$100 million every year influencing the US government, outspending clean energy advocacy groups by 27 to 1 in political activities between 2008 and 2018.⁶ Epistemic: the same industry has known about the climate impacts of its products since at least 1959, when its own trade association convened a briefing on rising atmospheric CO₂ — and has spent decades funding organised doubt about that knowledge.⁷ Procedural: industries systematically place former executives in regulatory and legislative roles, ensuring the institutions nominally overseeing them reflect their interests. Remove any one of these asymmetries and an immoral law becomes harder to maintain. Remove all three and it becomes structurally impossible to maintain indefinitely.

WHY IT PERSISTS

Good laws without structural conditions to sustain them revert. A single administration can rescind a regulation. A sympathetic committee can delay enforcement indefinitely. A well-funded lobby can occupy the institutions through which reform must pass. The pattern documented in Part Five is not an accident of politics. It is the predictable outcome of governance systems designed without the three conditions that would make reform rational for all parties.

WHAT CHANGES UNDER COMMONS WORLD

The Global Commons Advocacy Council (GCAC) — described in Part Four of this booklet — is the instrument that addresses all three asymmetries simultaneously. Drawing on the full ATE evidence base deposited in CR and the Evolutionary League's Forward Detection Report, GCAC publishes an annual Legal Reform Priorities document: the most consequential legal changes required globally and by jurisdiction, supported by accumulated verified evidence. Every

submission to every government is deposited in CR. Every outcome — achieved or failed — is permanently recorded.

GCAC does not compete on money. It competes on verified evidence in a permanent public record. A government that receives a GCAC submission backed by CR evidence and fails to act creates a permanent public record of having received specific evidence of specific harm and chosen not to address it. The financial asymmetry is neutralised because GCAC is publicly funded. The epistemic asymmetry is neutralised because the evidence is independently verified and accessible to all. The procedural asymmetry is neutralised because PCH's six governing bodies are constituted specifically to exclude capture by the interests their standards constrain. Immoral laws do not disappear overnight. But they lose the three conditions that currently make them durable.

✎ *Think of a law or a rule — local, national, or international — that you have always felt was wrong.*

Not wrong in a complicated way. Simply wrong: designed to serve the interests of the few at the cost of the many.

Notice how long it has existed. Notice who benefits from its continuation.

What has kept it in place? Not ideology. Not popular support. What specific mechanism has made it durable past the point where its original justification expired?

And what would need to change — not in people's values, but in the structure of the institutions maintaining it — for it to finally be repealed?

Hold that structural question as you move into the conversation.

COMMUNITY DISCUSSION

Name one law or rule in your country that serves the interests of the few at the cost of the many. What are the three specific things keeping it in place — and which would be most vulnerable to the kind of transparency Commons World describes?



Does Commons World replace government?

This is the most important question anyone can ask about Commons World. The short answer is: no. But it makes current government unrecognisable.

What Commons World does not do

CW does not legislate. Governments still pass laws. It does not tax. Governments still raise and spend revenue. It does not govern territory. Governments still hold that function. It does not command armies. Governments still control force. It does not elect leaders. Communities still choose their representatives. No CW institution can compel a sovereign government to do anything.

What it does instead

CW makes the cost of bad governance visible, permanent, and attributable. A government that passes a law benefiting a corporation at public expense creates a CR record. ATE verifies the gap between the claimed public benefit and the actual outcome. GAR scores the institution. OSN publishes it. GCAC submits a Legal Reform Priorities document. The next election occurs against that permanent, publicly accessible record. A government cannot hide behind complexity, delay, or managed invisibility — the three tools through which bad

governance has always survived. The record exists. It cannot be expunged. It cannot be outspent into obscurity.

This does not prevent bad governance. It makes bad governance progressively more expensive — politically, financially, and reputationally — until the rational choice for any government that wants to survive is to govern well.

What CW changes about legitimacy

Currently, a government derives legitimacy primarily from electoral mandate. Under CW's full operation, legitimacy has an additional condition: alignment with PCH baselines. A government that systematically destroys ecological integrity, excludes populations from participation, or forecloses options for future generations is not merely unpopular. Its decisions are void within the CW framework — not overthrown, not invaded, but not recognised as legitimate by the institutions, communities, and economic actors operating within CW's architecture. Sovereignty is not abolished. A government retains full sovereignty over its territory and its citizens. But its decisions carry weight in the broader world only to the extent they meet the conditions under which governance can claim legitimacy.

What CW most resembles

Not a government. Not a regulator. Not an NGO. CW most resembles a constitutional order — the set of conditions under which governance at every level must operate to be recognised as legitimate. The difference from existing constitutional orders is that it is global, evidence-based, and not administered by any state.

The closest analogy is the rule of law itself — the principle that no person or institution is above the standard, that the standard is applied consistently regardless of power, and that the legitimacy of every decision depends on its conformity with that standard. CW is an attempt to build that condition at civilisational scale, for the first time, on a foundation not dependent on the goodwill of any state, the

power of any army, or the patience of any generation waiting for the institutions currently benefiting from its absence to voluntarily surrender that benefit.

That is not government as we know it. It is something older and more fundamental: the condition that makes government worth having.

• *Think about the last time you felt genuinely governed well.*

Not a perfect decision. Not a government you agreed with on everything. Simply a moment when an institution acted in a way that felt honest, fair, and accountable to the people it served.

How rare was that moment? What made it possible?

Now think about the conditions that would need to exist for that to be the norm rather than the exception.

Not better people in charge. Better conditions under which any person in charge is held to account.

What would those conditions look like in your community? In your country?

Carry those conditions — not the people, the conditions — into the conversation.

COMMUNITY DISCUSSION

If Commons World were fully operational today — every claim verified, every cost visible, every institution scored — what is the one thing in your community that would change most immediately? And what would take the longest to change, and why?



*Governance is not what governments do.
It is the set of conditions under which
the people who make decisions
are held accountable to those who bear their consequences.
Those conditions do not yet fully exist.
Commons World is the architecture for building them.
The Commons Community is where that building begins.*

*Not in a parliament. Not in a corporation. Not in a campaign.
Here. In this room. With the people willing to see clearly,
together.*

SOURCES – PART SEVEN

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Mohan Lal Mahtani has lived in Lagos, Nigeria, for more than thirty-six years. He has worked across business, charitable work, and civic engagement — in multiple countries, cultures, and economic contexts. His interests span political philosophy, geopolitical economy, monetary history, and frameworks for collective governance and civilisational transition.

Commons World emerged not from a think tank or a university but from a lifetime of paying attention — to what works, to what fails, and to the structural conditions that explain the gap between them. He is the author of *The Visible World*, the founding book of Commons World, to be published in print in 2027.

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'The answer I eventually arrived at was neither political nor ideological.

It was structural.'



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