Creating pathways for

Restoring Flow

...by putting human needs at the centre
What you are about to see and read is an expression of some of the core assumptions, questions, and longings that are most alive in our community at this moment in time, as NGL decided not to take on the 501c3 status offered by our mother organisation, Bay NVC.

It is partly a distillation of previous and current conversations within NGL, as well as conversations between NGL members and the Cotyledon Fund about the tools we are developing to navigate the global situation that has emerged from centuries of activities based on separation, extraction, and accumulation.

We are sending you this proposal as much in the spirit of writing a letter and wanting to deepen our relationship so far, as from the longing to find more people who are curious and willing to support us, to witness and co-hold the way of being and experimenting that is most meaningful to us.

What we include here does not explain in detail the concepts and tools, and does not dwell in the deeper "Why's" and "How's" of each of them – though those are present elsewhere. It is more like opening the door to our living room, to our library, to our lab.

We invite you to look at what is on the table, in our shelves, in our hearts. To see who is discussing what, how and why. To get a felt sense of the kind of conversations it takes to create a world that works for all within NGL (and beyond).

What you are about to read is written in the spirit of open dialogue and choice. You are welcome to enter the space, taking this proposal more as a kaleidoscope than as a linear outline. Each page can be read on its own and is a gate to a core issue or tool we can engage with more deeply in the coming months.

We hope this way of reaching out to you is met with curiosity, that you find enough clarity and that it resonates with your path.

If you feel moved to support us in the transition we are in this year, we imagine having a next conversation with you to determine a focus and explore the avenues.

We are imagining the Fund being a potential donor, as well as a witness and a research-partner that shares some of our core values.
The power of the soft qualities

This overview is an outline and contains “nuggets” of past and current conversations, including a page about why being “in conversation” is meaningful to us.

You are invited to look at the vision we are holding for this project and the long term vision guiding our transition and to follow the link to learning packets from the digital shelf to get an overview of the tools.

The next steps would organically follow according to the degree of alignment that emerges. This is potent and vulnerable. It speaks to some of our core ways of operating: humility, releasing control, and co-holding.

One continuum relates to how you may support us financially. On one end of the continuum we see the option of you choosing a fixed amount for your contribution to support our basic infrastructure. On the other end of the continuum is the option of taking a major step towards a closer relationship in which you learn of our needs when we make them known to our community, which is three times a year, at which point we decide your contribution, which may include zero at any one of those points. Within this continuum, we can move towards the collaborative relationship to the extent that you have willingness and in a way that honours the capacity and needs of both organisations.

The other continuum, which intersects with the first one, is about the nature of the relationship. On one end of the continuum we see the option of the Cotyledon Fund engaging with us, in this last year in which we have a 501(c)3 status, in the familiar way that foundations engage with nonprofit entities. On the other end of the continuum is the option of the Cotyledon Fund choosing to become an NGL Organisational Friend, with access to all we do, which includes receiving information, joining coaching calls, using the tools we have developed as all the other NGLs Friends. It also includes, in this case, receiving support from NGL practitioners in the areas where the Cotyledon Fund may want to receive support, especially in aligning with vision, values, and purpose.

Our hope is that this document will give you all the information you need in order to choose how you want to engage with us. We see many options and we are aiming to move together with you in deciding where to meet with each other.
Kaleidoscope - Overview

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The word conversing comes from the union of two Latin roots: *cum*, "with", and *versare*, "to turn around", so that to converse originally means "to turn around with" the other.

"A culture is a network of conversations that defines a way of living".

_Humberto Maturana, The Ontology of Conversing_

"Nobody can say: Cecosesola is mine. We don't have a manager or a chair or a vice-chair. We suspend property without abolishing it. The only formal thing is our assemblies. And there are loads of them!"  
"We are basically one big conversation".

_Members of the collaborative organisation Cecocesola (Venezuela) in an interview with Silke Helfrich_
Flow, togetherness, and choice

We know a different world is possible. A world based on flow, togetherness, and choice. When it is about these most fundamental dimensions, there is a clear difference between being "paid for what we do" according to a contract that stipulates “how much money we get per hour’’ and "being gifted sufficient money to attend to our material needs’ with dignity and playful efficiency by people who engage , in tandem with us, at the level of needs.

The difference becomes even more tangible within the distribution circles of our “Financial Gift Hubs’. Listening to the conversations; feeling the struggles; and witnessing the togetherness and the flow that arise in those spaces make a tangible impression that no amount of written words can convey.

We are so used to believing in competition and so used to suppressing our needs and what we really want, that it is almost impossible to imagine a world based on willingness, mutual care, and collaboration. The tools we work with and the agreements we have within NGL are supporting us in navigating the almost impassable terrain of patriarchal conditioning. They help us to learn what it takes to care for each other’s needs on the material plane.

What we are experimenting with one baby step at a time is how to transform our consciousness and design systems that allow our limited resources to flow organically towards those places where there is more need. We are committed, over time, to remove the layers of abstraction that mediate the giving and receiving under patriarchal conditions.
We are at a crossroads

We are, as a species, on a path of self destruction.

What will it take to turn the tide?

What will it take to preserve the biology of love?

What has the potential to undo patriarchy?

The nature of the crossroads is a choice.

We need pathways, tools, and infrastructure,

that support us in re-connecting with ourselves,

with others, with nature, and with life

Miki Kashtan - Co-founder of Bay Area Nonviolent Communication (BayNVC) and of the Nonviolent Global Liberation community (NGL)
From Obedience and Shame to Freedom and Belonging
Transforming patriarchy
...by leaning on the soft qualities to restore choice, togetherness, and flow
Groups, communities, movements, and organisations have available pathways in multiple places in the world that support their commitment to transforming instrumental relationships based on exchange and power, into relationships fully based on purpose alignment, caring for needs, and capacity assessment.

This is made possible, in large part, by releasing existing accumulation of material resources of all kinds, created from the conversion of Earth’s abundant flow to private property, back into the commons and by redirecting existing pathways that intensify accumulation to flow for the benefit of all.
In the course of the period of exploration, NGL and the Cotyledon Fund experience a shift away from an instrumental relationship and into a collaborative partnership.

NGL’s explorations in finding material pathways for functioning according to principles of the maternal gift economy are nourished by the resources available within the Cotyledon Fund.

Within the partnership, NGL offers their unique tools and coaching in support of the Cotyledon Fund deepening its own explorations into shifting the field of philanthropy to align more with its own vision, values, and purpose.

Both groups are engaging in a collaborative discernment and cross-fertilization process along the way. Money flows in a way which is aligned with the needs of both organisations as they move along the process.

Clear agreements and a shared purpose are in place to co-hold a sense of shared risk, intimacy, and shared vulnerability.
NGL's visionary - practical path
Nuggets from the conversation so far...

We need more brave individuals... and varied pathways...
We need more people and more tools to support the restoration of FLOW... by releasing what has been accumulated over generations, rather than by "pulling" or using subtle forms of coercion.

On the other side of Collapse, which we see as inevitable, how are humans going to organise their affairs? What kind of tools and infrastructure do we need to create communities that care for the needs of all? This is part of the RESEARCH WE ARE DOING!

How far, in the world as it exists, can the tools that we are developing reach other people to meet them where they are and to pull them towards VISION?

Our sense is that one fundamental axis of liberation is about releasing CONTROL. What particular form this releasing control takes, varies and is contextual. Part of our research is to see how far we can go, over time, with baby steps that take us into what we call the "strategic discomfort" zone.
Going all the way to the source

Nuggets from the conversation so far...

What we are doing in NGL is less urgent than getting babies out of the water. We are not even focusing on who is throwing the babies into the water. We want to go all the way upstream, to the source. To the spring. We are moving from wrestling to prevent the “bad guys” from putting babies into the water, into creating a field in which there are no bad guys at all.
‘Experiments with Truth’ originates from the title of Mahatma Gandhi’s autobiography. The concept of experiments is central to NGL and fully embedded in its purpose: “to integrate nonviolence into the fabric of human life through ongoing live experiments with truth focused on individual and collective liberation.” Essentially, we are an experimenting body rather than an administrative one. NGL is a community of practice dedicated to ongoing experimentation in many areas and we are searching for institutions that also see themselves as learning organisations and engage in a shared purpose. In addition to our core experimentation with resource flow, we also engage in research and experimentation in other areas.
Core experiment: nonviolence and the Vision Mobilisation Framework

Gandhi spoke of nonviolence in thought, word, and action. The Vision Mobilisation Framework supports integration of nonviolence at all those levels.
Nonviolence in thought, word, and action

Aligning our thoughts

a) Starting with vision as a pathway of exiting patriarchal conditioning

b) Values as a pathway to pulling us internally towards vision

c) Practices as concrete anchors of values, moving us towards integration

d) Bringing tenderness through capacity assessment

Aligning our actions

a) Purpose, mission, goals, and objectives interweave to pull us closer to Vision

b) Agreements anchor our commitments in action

c) Theory of change calibrates our energy to stay the course

We are daily experimenting with making these pathways progressively more aligned and more practical at the same time.

Aligning our words

Practice with words (including the core modality of Nonviolent Communication NVC) as key to liberation.
Other areas of experimentation

Collaborative Systems
Releasing control means letting go of deeply ingrained patterning in all areas of functioning and finding alternatives that are rooted in flow, togetherness, and choice. Each of the shifts below entails significant experimentation and research to learn what new agreements and structures can sustain the shift without re-introducing mechanisms of power over and control unwittingly, even as we are trying to dismantle them. When we make decisions, the shift is from either/or to integrative decision-making. When we engage with flowing resources, the shift is from incentives to the principle of willingness. When we share information, the shift is from control to transparency. When we give and receive feedback, the shift in focus is from performance management to learning. When we engage with conflict, the shift is from consequences to increasing capacity that will then allow us to solve more problems without losing trust.

Power and Leadership
We are experimenting with how we can support both structural and internal shifts so that leadership is neither concentrated nor eliminated and, instead, is distributed. When no one has structural power they can then exercise over anyone else, every member has the power to make decisions pertaining to any aspect of the organisation. How far can such structural shifts go in sustaining the transformation of internalised messages about power, systemic differences in how people function and what they expect based on social location, and the profound powerlessness that is endemic in patriarchal societies? How far can we, simultaneously, shift the patterns that put enormous pressure on visionary leaders and then create conflict and burnout? These are some of the leading edge questions we engage with on a daily basis within NGL.

Restoring the Flow of Feedback
Our perspective is that in modern, patriarchal societies the natural feedback flows built into life and human relationships have been obstructed in multiple ways. We recognize that none of the shifts and experiments we are doing anywhere within NGL can gain momentum and traction without a robust feedback system that successfully pulls us out of either/or patterns of avoidance on the one hand and judgments, gossip, shaming, and blaming on the other. We are focusing on constructing agreements that enable a free flow of feedback, so that we can track what decisions are made, how they impact specific stakeholders and projects, and how everyone who has expertise in relevant areas can influence the decision-making process. We aim to engage in ongoing, open conversations about the impacts of our individual and collective actions on others and projects within NGL. This requires a rigorous practice in learning how to give and receive feedback, as well as agreements as to when feedback will be given, how and to whom, and based on what criteria. This is one of our current weak links that we are seeking the means to transform in this coming year.
Any time human beings live in proximity to each other there is some degree of mutual impact that is simply there. Capitalism has given us the illusion of exit. In places that are more communal, the reality of entangled fates is part of the fabric of life. If a harvest fails or someone has a problem, it is not just one person who is affected; everybody is affected too; and everyone steps in to care for the impacts.

Experimenting with shared risk is about re-creating, this time by conscious choice, the conditions that allow the depth of community and collaboration that shared risk makes possible. It is about re-embedding us within the flow of giving and receiving, what Genevieve Vaughan calls “the maternal gift economy”.

Shared risk is very young in the global north, and even more so within NGL.

There have been many experiments in shared risk and no exit concurrent with living together. Those experiments have been done in the world, many times over, with different parameters. Even though such experiments are not new, this is still an experimental field and one that NGL is currently engaging in.

Within it, the primary research question for us is how much the NGL framework, tools, and ways of doing things can support such experiments in integrating liberation, nonviolence, and the gift economy into an actual flow of exiting the market more and more over time.

NGL is also engaging in a different experiment that is to our knowledge entirely new: globally distributed, asynchronous, online risk sharing.

We believe this is a key experiment for the future of humanity.

We believe that basing the flow of resources only on face-to-face relationships, when we know each other and have a visceral sense of each other, is not going to be enough to transform the very thick groove of resource flow patterns in the world from accumulation and exchange to actual flow.
Tools and structures to navigate shared risk

What will it take for us to bind our fortunes together? Based on our vision and the very real need to create a new legal structure and organisational basis, we have adapted and expanded a tool created in the global South, in Brazil, and created two additional tools.

Financial Gift Hubs

(Modified from the Money Pile tool created by the RestorativeCircles.org project)
A tool for making material needs transparent, asking for money, and distributing it to support financial resources to flow from where they exist to where they are needed within willingness and purpose. Each FGH expresses a particular arrangement of shared risk.

Shared Risk Pods

Groups of people come together to move towards fully binding their resources and life decisions with each other. We are experimenting with local and virtual (global) pods.

Liberation Pods

A methodology of supporting individuals and small groups to engage with the limitations that capitalism presents to functioning in shared risk, so as to increase capacity over time to embrace full risk sharing.
Our learning edge in shared risk

The ultimate vision we have is to exit the market and create a web of physical communities that are held together within a virtual community that is global, where we are all connected through webs of mutual impacts and care, and where we make the decisions that affect us all together.

Sharing material risk is always on a continuum, not binary. Within NGL, we want to work towards more and more risk sharing, rather than less, as we create a web of giving and receiving that holds all of us.

Getting there means looking at a number of challenges simultaneously:

1. The legal and financial bases for shared risk are rare and mostly unknown to us. We are working to find a path forward that is within capacity for all of us to continue to move forward in alignment with the maternal gifting principles.

2. It takes a lot of work to sustain our infrastructure. We do not have enough money for all of it. We are working on finding ways to increase the flow of resources into NGL.

3. NGL distributes money based on open dialogue in our Financial gift Hub distribution circles. We all know how much money each of us requested and how much money we currently have. So we have the challenge of being in dialogue amongst people who know that there isn’t enough money to sustain all of us. We are working on increasing capacity to distribute what is usually insufficient money in a way that cares for everyone.

This last one is our collective learning edge: we are learning how to support people in putting all their needs on the table, even across divides of power and privilege, and to choose, together, how to prioritise where money goes based on need and purpose, without tying it to value, hours worked, or how much money someone brought in.

We continue to deepen our discoveries about how to stay within, and thereby increase, capacity over time. We are getting better at it. Because NGL is a virtual community, it is also far more challenging to do that.
Nonviolent Global Liberation community website

https://nglcommunity.org
This is the main entry point to connecting with NGL, understanding how we function and what we are about, and how to join us. We are slowly adding more information and resources to the website.

Learning Packets

- Link to the Packets: https://thefearlessheart.org/store/learning-packets/
  This page has links to all the completed learning packets, all of which are offered on a gift economy basis for download, including freely. This project is still unfolding and Miki anticipates completing it by the end of the year. Some of the ones particularly relevant to what’s in this document are below, and the page includes a host of others.

- NVC Basics : https://thefearlessheart.org/item/nvc-basics-packet/

- Mobilizing toward Vision https: //thefearlessheart.org/item/mobilizing-toward-vision-packet/

- Resource Flow Systems: From Incentive to Willingness 
  https://thefearlessheart.org/item/resource-flow-systems-from-incentive-to-willingness-packet/

Vision Mobilization
This site includes much more information about the Vision Mobilisation framework presented in this proposal. https://visionmobilisation.org

Reweaving Humanity Commons #1

https://reweavinghumanity.org
This is the website for the first experiment with truth aiming to create a physical community on land, operating fully with the principles that guide our work and continually serving as a lab from which new insights arise and then become new materials.
Engaging with the Cotyledon Fund

In our preliminary conversations we discerned that members of the Cotyledon Fund team see the historical paradigm of philanthropy as one which rewards concentration of wealth and resources and unwittingly perpetuates power imbalances that have devastating impacts on human societies and the biosphere.

While the team is intentional in trying to address and undo these patterns in various ways, the Cotyledon Fund team is also operating within the limitations of the current system, which prioritises money as the main asset and imposes legal and financial rules that were created in a context that is steadily becoming outdated.

We are moved to discover that the Cotyledon Fund team desires authentic relationships in which everyone, regardless of different personal and professional roles, can show up as whole people. We want to engage collaboratively with the team to discover and support processes that make these kinds of relationships possible. A key question in this layer of experimentation and research is the degree to which transactional or instrumental interactions are necessary or beneficial to attend to a shared purpose.

This is where we might discover a shared purpose in exploring shared risk.

- What do we mean by shared risk?
- What is its potential of undoing ‘patriarchal conditioning’?
- What does it mean to support the restoration of flow by de-accumulation?
- Does this exploration have the potential to transform philanthropy as we know it?

We believe we can support the Fund team in finding a new path of engaging with groups like ours. Our hope is that this year’s collaboration might support the Cotyledon Fund in breaking through the impasse of wanting to support people whose work or worldview speaks to their values, and yet being restricted by existing legal and financial structures (e.g. 501c3 status) from supporting those people and initiatives.
The possible focus of the funding

I. Exploring shared risk within the community along the transition out of relying on a 501(c)3 fiscal sponsor

- Engaging with the world in progressively less instrumental ways?
- Inviting capacity to emerge from real needs related to values and purpose rather than instrumental needs related to adapting to structures of the state, the market, and foundations
- Engaging in initiatives to support liberation from ‘patriarchal conditioning’ and stepping more and more into shared risk
- Identifying next baby steps towards identifying new patterns of resource flow globally (without living together)
- Discovering the conditions under which people with assets and accumulated resources within and beyond NGL would be willing to de-accumulate and support our experimentation
- Identifying necessary resource flow patterns to sustain this experimentation

II. Exploring shared risk between the Cotyledon Fund and NGL

- Creating a shared vision for the project, clarifying shared purpose, clarifying the needs of the Cotyledon Fund sharing NGL tools and how they could support NGL to have agreements with the Fund to harvest regularly
- Creating a Vision Mobilisation structure for The Cotyledon Fund
- Engaging in active co-discernment, and therefore more shared risk.

Overall, we see the potential for stepping away, together, from the predict and control model that is part of the destruction of our planet and into active participation on the part of the Cotyledon Fund, such as observing FGH distribution circles, Liberation Pod meetings, and anything else that interested Team and Board members wish to learn about as we engage in discernment and conversation about which resources will flow in which direction: money that the Fund wants to gift to NGL, and support for visionary alignment that NGL wants to gift to the Cotyledon Fund.
NGL's immediate financial needs

NGL operates its Financial Gift Hub (FGH) three times a year, and distributes money at the end of April, August, and December. We never know in advance what the need will be and what the contributions will be that aim to match it. Here's what we know about the one we are currently in. This is a snapshot. Within weeks the requests may increase through dialogue, because people are being interviewed. And the pledges may still change, too.

Needs
(from 25 individuals and 2 shared risk pods; including 11 requests of zero):

- Full: $67,772
- Restrained: $31,563
- Minimum: $18,295

What is being offered
through contributions

- On hand: $14,958
- Pledged: $16,812

The Gap

- Minimum: covered
- Restrained: covered
- Full: $36,002

Our present request:

$25,000
Financial flow - a view into the future

We are beginning to engage in activities that we believe will increase NGL's capacity to sustain itself, and all of it is slow to unfold given that our limited capacity is focused on sustaining our core operations. We are celebrating that, despite this, we are actually managing to seed additional experimentation!

New sources of financial inflow

We see a range of opportunities that, over time, we anticipate will increase the flow of resources into NGL. This is based on:

- Monthly introductions to NGL fundraising events
- Courses on the Vision Mobilisation framework offered to the public (starting 2023)
- Courses on Nonviolent Communication through a systemic lens (starting May 2022)
- Engaging with visionary communities and organisations and inviting their contributions as NGL Organisational Friends
- More shared risk activities of people within NGL bringing in income from their work with others using the NGL framework

Impact of the transition

We also have enormous unknowns about the impact on our expenses from the ending of BayNVC's fiscal sponsorship at the end of the year. Even as we anticipate the need growing from what it is now, we also anticipate the incoming flow growing in such a way that the relative gap may diminish. Living with this lack of clarity and fluidity is what it takes to increase flow and release control.

We want to fully own the insecurity that goes along with it, and we long to create significant breathing room beyond people's restrained requests, as everyone is stretching to ask for as little as possible, and the restrained requests already include impacts on people.
NGL's Anticipated financial flow

Needs per year
This includes the increased infrastructure needed to sustain new activities

- Full: $250,000
- Restrained: $125,000
- Minimum: $70,000

Anticipated inflows
Based on past experience and anticipated new activities

- Existing flows: $50,000
- New flows: $30,000

The Gap

- Full: $170,000
- Restrained: $45,000

Our possible request to the fund

- $75,000
Where do we go from here?

We have laid out where we are, what we are doing, why we see an opportunity to collaborate, what our needs are, and what we have to offer.

We want to keep engaging with you to choose, together, how to collaborate within a continuum of how we might relate.

One continuum relates to how you may support us financially. On one end of the continuum we see the option of you choosing a fixed amount for your contribution to support our basic infrastructure.

On the other end of the spectrum is the option of taking a major step towards a closer relationship in which you learn of our needs when we make them known to our community three times a year, at which point we decide your contribution, which may include zero at any one of those points. Within this continuum, we can move towards the collaborative relationship to the extent that you have willingness and in a way that honours the capacity and needs of both organisations.

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We send you this document without a way of knowing whether a next conversation and further steps will follow. We rest in knowing we have done what we love to do, leaned on our capacity, acted in full integrity, and communicated with as much clarity as the written form allows at this particular moment. We hand the rest back to life with full surrender.