

# WEAVING ALTERNATIVES #07: A periodical of the Global Tapestry of Alternatives

The contents of this periodical are also available online in [this webpage](#).



## Editorial

Dear readers,

It is our pleasure to share Global Tapestry of Alternative's seventh periodical with you. With this issue we announce the renaming of our traditional newsletter, now called *"WEAVING ALTERNATIVES: A periodical of the Global Tapestry of Alternatives"*.

The Global Tapestry of Alternatives seeks to build bridges between networks of Alternatives around the globe and promote the creation of new processes of confluence. You can know more about the project, in our [introductory note](#).

We, across the world are facing immense uncertainties that pose very serious challenges and have social, economic, political, cultural and ecological implications for most of us. The attempt is to bring to you the news, perspectives, thoughts, ideas, reflections, and dialogues on alternatives to the current dominant regimes. Importantly, what do they offer us as pathways towards just, equitable and ecologically wise futures. It is a humble attempt to bring together the collective envisioning of these pluriversal alternatives by creating a space for sharing and dialoguing.

We intend to share this periodical every two months sometimes thematic and sometimes general but broadly sharing perspectives, news on activities being seeded through GTA, as well as perspectives/news/thoughts/questions from tapestry weavers and endorsing organisations and networks. We see this periodical part of a process of knowing each-others' work, engaging with ideas, facilitating collaborations and initiating co-writing and co-learning processes. Yes, the objectives are ambitious and that is why we need your support, your contributions and engagement. We invite you to this sharing, reflecting, dialoguing, healing, and envisioning space.

This periodical comes at the times when we at GTA have lost our elder and wisdom holder, Gustavo Esteva. We dedicate this periodical to him and it starts with an obit for Gustavo authored by Franco Augusto and Arturo Escobar. Additionally, the periodical features updates from our weavers in India (Vikalp Sangam) and Mexico and Colombia (Crianza Mutua), envisioning of a post-growth economy by Post-growth Institute, and perspective pieces from Lina Álvarez Villarreal, Xochitl Leyva Solano and Axel Köhler and Talking Wings.



## Hasta siempre, Gustavo

This new installment of the GTA's periodical is certainly very special to us, infused with a collective feeling of great sadness. On March 17, Gustavo Esteva, co-founder and member of the Global Tapestry of Alternatives, left us. Gustavo was undoubtedly a strong inspiration and guide for several generations, a radical dissenting imagination and world referent of critical thinking. His vision and sensitivity to the world was fueled by the hope of "those from below", the grassroots groups and movements that transform the world in the here and now.

Gustavo departed surrounded by the love of his family and friends, who accompanied him during his last weeks from all corners of the planet, whether in presence or in spirit. He passed away in his place in Oaxaca, with his son and daughters and his beloved *compañera*, Nicole. His farewell took place in his second home, the Universidad de la Tierra of Oaxaca, one of those remarkable places that for more than 20 years have illuminated the rebelliousness of other possible worlds.

Arturo Escobar, friend and member of the GTA core team, said to us:

*"Let's take some time to accompany him in his journey. Let's keep the legacy of his incredibly autonomous, collective, and libertario thought alive and flourishing. His inspiration was unmeasurable, and it will go on for a long time."*

Gustavo helped to create and shape the Global Tapestry and dedicated much of his energies to weaving and promoting it. His main priority was to foster a GTA oriented to strengthen local processes, grassroots groups, and radical alternatives.

He was a great friend and mentor, and those of us who promote the GTA will carry on under his guidance, following his thoughts and sense of political hope, walking together to accomplish his dreams.



## Vikalp Sangam (India)

Over the period of May to December 2021, the Vikalp Sangam (VS) process has continued to evolve and grow on multiple fronts.

The Ladakh Vikalp Sangam on Food and Agriculture was held on 19th and 20th September 2021 at Saboo village near Leh, Ladakh. It was a two-day Sangam with around 25 participants ranging from farmers to scientists. The first day was spent on discussing the policies currently being applied in Ladakh, and whether they are relevant to Ladakh or not. On the second day, the possibility of a Ladakh Wellbeing Index was discussed, and SLC-IT and Kalpavriksh are currently working towards creating a comprehensive Index, for not only Ladakh but all of Western Himalayas.

The third Western Himalaya Vikalp Sangam was held from 21st to 24th October 2021 at Devalsari, Uttarakhand. The Western Himalaya Vikalp Sangam is an alternatives confluence based around Jammu, Kashmir, Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh, and Uttarakhand. The participants included people working on social movements, agrarian issues, sustainable rural livelihoods, environmental conservation, community-based tourism, youth issues, and education. The discussions covered key issues which present challenges to the region, as well as actionable responses and collaborative agendas for the upcoming years.

This was shortly followed by the annual Vikalp Sangam Core Group meeting held on 27th and 28th October 2021 at Dehradun, Uttarakhand. The Sangam was attended by 32 Core Group members. The discussions included a review of last year's activities, key issues that require urgent focus through advocacy, as well as roadmaps for synergies and collaborations among the various groups present.

Vikalp Sutra (threads of alternatives) is a collective, non-hierarchical platform initiated in June 2020, to facilitate dignified livelihoods, workers' rights and economic democracy in India. The network aims to promote community self-reliance, based on the principles of dignity, justice, equity, peace and ecological sustainability. The platform is currently hosting three projects. Sutra AjeeWiki is a database of organisations and individuals working on dignified livelihoods across India. Sutra Vaani is a free and locally facilitated HELPLINE for workers (especially informal/ unorganised sector) in livelihoods' distress. The information of this helpline is curated in local languages by the community themselves. Lastly, Sutra Mandalis are action oriented conversation discussing dignified livelihoods through various lenses. They have had dialogues exploring the craft sector, women farmers, and dignified livelihood in Asia Pacific. They have been documenting all their recent conversations on their [Facebook page](#).

Vikalp Varta, an online dialogue series started in April 2020 which aims to document the different grounded alternatives around India and create a colearning space has started a collaboration with National Alliance of People's Movements (NAPM) Grounded Voices, which started in acknowledgement of the invisibilization of many voices and assertions from people's struggles against oppression, which don't make it into 'mainstream' conversations and spaces. The sessions is scheduled for 6:00pm IST, every first Sunday of the month! The collaboration's first session 'Women Farmers: Resistance and Alternatives' explored the challenges, struggle, alternatives, and the way forward for women farmers in direct conversation with them from Maharashtra, Haryana, Punjab and Telengana in India. [You can access the talk here](#).

Vikalp Sangam helped in facilitation of Asia Pacific Social Forum. In 2020 organisations in India, began a discussion to revive the processes of World Social Forum which had been dormant since 2006. A newly formed group called Forum Connect, focusing on mobilising people in a renewed Social Forum process in Asia and Africa, started working together, and a new process evolved, which resulted in the creation of an ever expanding group called "Asia Mobilising towards WSF 2022 in Mexico" in preparation for the next World Social Forum event - which will be both physical and online will be in Mexico from 1 May to 7 May 2022.

They held an Asia Pacific Social Forum with organisations, movements, networks and groups based in the region held between 18th - 20th February. Vikalp Sangam facilitated 4 activities:

1. Self Organised Activity: Water Security And Climate Justice
2. Panel Discussion of Thematic Focus Group 7 (Climate, Ecology and Transition): Reimagining Just Transitions
3. Self Organised Activity: Sutra Mandali (Action-Oriented Conversation) on Dignified Livelihoods
4. Self Organised Activity: Young People Energising Social Change



## Crianza Mutua Mexico

Crianza Mutua is a network process that is taking place in México, inspired by Zapatismo and emerged within the autonomous Universidad de la Tierra in Oaxaca, Mexico. It seeks to identify, document and connect groups through communal webs which are actively dismantling hierarchies in everyday life, putting principles of sufficiency into practice and constructing and extending their autonomy from the market and the State.

During 2022 we had several virtual encounters where various groups that participated shared initiatives and activities that are currently being developed in their territories related to:

Experience in food production and consumption processes linked to the respect of the mother earth. Processes of defending the Territory and the importance of the Assemblies in the communities. The work and prevention of diseases with plants and knowledge of the communities.

Process where they rescue the traditional plants to cure and also to rescue the knowledge of the ancestors. The importance of valuing food as a fundamental health process. The importance of learning beyond the institutional processes of education that are often linked to power systems. The need to communicate through means that are in the communities themselves and receive information that builds life and does not divide it.

At the end of 2021, we had the opportunity to gather physically in two different occasions because we saw the need to weave ourselves together in person beyond the virtual world that at times has separated us more.

The first encounter occurred in San Cristobal de las Casas, Chiapas, that allowed women and men from various communities in Mexico and other countries to share their experiences around healing to take care of life. The experiences were through the sharing of concrete practices around midwifery, the use of medicinal plants, the spiritual strength of ancestral knowledge and respect for grandmothers and grandfathers, the importance of rituals in daily life, the sacred bond with food, the role of women in healing processes and finally healing as a way of defending the territory.

The second occurred Capulalpam de Mendez, Oaxaca, that it gather authorities from different communities in the region, traditional healers, community radio stations, learning centers and inhabitants from different regions of Oaxaca, in order to share experiences around the defense of the territory, weave forms of struggle in the region and the state, invite to build changes in everyday life, which allows to advance in the defense of the territory from different areas; legal and political, as well as from community life through food, healing and communication.

At the end the proposed to document the history of defense and that this history be part of community education. Generate accompaniment among the communities in resistance to continue walking together, weaving autonomy but also sharing the struggles, and making an attentive call to all the communities and groups that keep the battle alive in defense of the territory.

In Crianza Mutua Mexico the affection, the friendship, constitutes the pillar that nourishes our daily life. It is not about mere 'feelings', but about ways of relating that have become political categories that represents experiences that can inspire many people. Alternatives that we also share with process that are happening in India and Colombia and that we are weaving in the context of the Global Tapestry of Alternatives.



## Crianzas Mutuas Colombia

During the last months, Crianzas Mutuas Colombia has participated in several activities. By the end of November 2021, we had a first encounter with Vilkrap from India and Crianzas Mutuas México. Since we all speak different languages, we decided to share our paths through a video that compiles our struggles in different territories of Colombia. Concretely, we have been nurturing emerging alternatives in the spheres of health, economy, education, and art. The aim of these efforts is to liberate Mother Earth and the peoples that have learned to live in a symbiotic relationship with her. We encourage solidarity economies through the creation of peasant markets that are better understood as “markets of resistance”. The idea is to create exchange webs that ensure reciprocity through food sharing. This means that trade must assure benefits both for the producers and the buyers, and that these benefits must be based on the regeneration of agriculture. We also encourage urban gardens and short commercial circuits. Regarding health systems, we are working on the construction of popular and communitarian systems that build from ancestral knowledges. We have also been working on harvesting water, for water brings life, movement, and knowledge. In midst of fierce and egregious violence, we see life flowering thanks to the resistance build from and with the earth, and indigenous, peasant and afro-colombian modes of life.

Also, we are collectively writing a book titled *“Pluritopías. Después del fin del mundo de la civilización y la barbarie”* (Pluritopias. After the end of the world of civilization and barbarism). The aim of the book is double. We want to bring back to our memory the paths that we have been walking over the last years in Crianzas Mutuas Colombia, and to shed light on the multiple ways of weaving with the territories that we inhabit on behalf of life, joy, and abundance beyond State, capitalism and patriarchy. The book traces back the emerging processes of more than 40 collectives in Colombia that are building alternatives in the face of coloniality and development. The book also recalls the conversations entertained with Crianzas Mutuas Mexico and Vilkrap India, dialogues that nurture and inspire our own paths. The book is written both in Spanish and in non-colonial languages, it also includes non-logocentric languages, such as videos, songs and images.

On February 2022, we gathered in Cali around the presentation of the book *“Pluriverse. A post-development dictionary”*. The book was presented by Arturo Escobar and Alberto Acosta, and it was commented by afro-Colombian, indigenous, and peasant social leaders. This was the opportunity to reflect on the importance of inspiring the imagination of sustainable futures by shedding light on existing alternatives in the region.

Finally, with the *Tejido de transicionantes por el Valle del Cauca* we are currently working on a dream that is already emerging: to redesign the Valley of Cauca region based on enrooted conceptions of Buen vivir (good living) and abundance. This region has been marked by racial violence and ecological devastation, due to sugarcane plantations and illegal economies that actively produce the rural and urban zones divide. This violence is not hazardous but results from a modern design whose aim is the accumulation of capital. Our hope is to weave the relationship between the countryside and the city with and from communitarian initiatives that already exist in the region.



## Nurturing bonds through education

By Lina Álvarez Villarreal

It is beyond doubt that we are going through a deep civilizational crisis. This crisis has expressed itself in a multiplicity of crises: political, economic, ecological and, more recently, health crises. I believe that the driving principle of this devastating situation is to be found in the breakdown of the relationship of modern societies with the Earth (understood as living web of relationships). This rupture is manifested in the exclusion of nature from the social contract, in the pre-eminence given to the growth economy that treats nature as a mere resource to be exploited, and in modern conceptions of politics where anthropocentric elements (such as human reason or power) are conceived as the only source of normativity. I believe that the antidote to this crisis lies in the re-establishment of this primordial relationship with the Earth, an objective that can only be attained through practices that enable rootedness in a living place.

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## Gesturing Towards Post Growth

By Robert Wanalo and Natalie Holmes

The Post Growth Institute (PGI) is an international, not-for-profit organization leading the shift to a world where people, companies, and nature thrive together within ecological limits. We work collaboratively to develop ideas, programmes, events, and alliances that promote the equitable circulation of money, power, and resources in our local communities and global economy.

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## Yutsilal Bahlumilal Pluriversity: Co-creation of agro-eco-visual alternatives

by Xochitl Leyva Solano and Axel Köhler

Many people across our planet have been inspired by the Zapatista movement, not least by their call for creating local alternatives for a world in which many worlds fit.

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## When Rivers Speak: A Storytelling Tapestry of a Regions Waterways

By Talking Wings

A tapestry of stories, pieces of a puzzle that fit together, memories that are woven to form the land we call home. We are all made of stories. They shape our sense of self, the cultures we inhabit, and the environments we navigate, nurture and exploit. For centuries (some would say millennia) storytelling has also been a weapon of the rich and powerful. The colonizing and self-destructive narrative capitalism currently spins is all-consuming. The oligarchs and their accomplices want us to believe that they hold a monopoly on storytelling.

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