

Earth 4All



Imagine Earth4All

Storytelling as a tool for advocacy



THE 50
PERCENT



Letter from the editor

"Earth for All: A Survival Guide for Humanity" presents us with a wonderful and unique opportunity. The book builds on the Club of Rome's Limits to Growth, the think-thank's most famous report, and reminds us how its message from 1972 still holds true today: our Earth's resources and ecosystems, which we all depend on, cannot support present rates of economic growth much beyond this century.

"Earth for All: A Survival Guide for Humanity" discusses the most pressing challenges of today - climate crisis, nature loss and ecosystem degradation, growing inequality and social tension - in a way quite characteristic to the Club of Rome, bringing clarity and a sense of urgency to the issue, but never without hope and tangible solutions.

I have preoccupied myself with environmental challenges and social injustices for a few years now - from creating resources on child soldiers in Syria at Amnesty International, to studying the impacts of climate change on gender inequality and working on campaigns highlighting the drastic rate of nature loss. Reading damning reports on the state of our planet is, unfortunately, nothing new to me.

But Earth4All's findings hit me in a way that nothing before ever has. The 'Too Little Too Late' scenario, which very much represents the path that we are currently on, filled me with a sense of urgency, if not anxiety, thinking about how our leaders today seem unwilling to take the needed steps to shield us from the worst impacts of the climate crisis and societal collapse. Once I finished the book however, it became one of my greatest sources of hope. The 'Giant Leap' shows us it we can indeed tackle the climate crisis, and not only that, we can make societies better, healthier, more resilient and prosperous as we do so. We already have the tools to achieve the transformation needed.

In this edition, our Storytelling Fellows take you through what each of these scenarios could look like. I hope the space between where we are, and where we need to be, does not frighten, but inspires you. We have everything to lose by doing nothing, and everything to gain from acting. Our Earth, our families, our communities and ultimately our dreams are counting on us taking the leap.

-Vanessa Terschluse



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About Us

The 50 Percent is a youth-led organisation which focuses on activating a generation and empowering youth to act on issues they are passionate about, whether that be by creating a space for them to be heard in our listening sessions, supporting them with the skills to address eco-anxiety and feel empowered to tell their stories.

Our initiative started as a part of the Global Youth Engagement Program. It runs in partnership with the Club of Rome.





About Earth4All

Earth4All started as a vibrant collective of leading economic thinkers, scientists, and advocates, convened by the Club of Rome, the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research, the Stockholm Resilience Centre and the BI Norwegian Business School.

With more and more people and organisations joining, Earth4All has become a platform to connect and amplify the chorus of voices that want to upgrade our economies. The momentum is growing. Communities and policy makers across the world are already changing the way we think economics.

Everybody can get involved. We need everybody to secure a safe and prosperous future for everyone on this planet. It is possible.

Earth4All builds on the legacies of The Limits to Growth and the Planetary Boundaries frameworks. Science is at the heart of Earth4All's work. We must rethink capitalism and move beyond GDP for a safe, secure and prosperous future in the Anthropocene.

To find out more, visit:
www.earth4all.life



Storytelling as a tool for advocacy

a project by

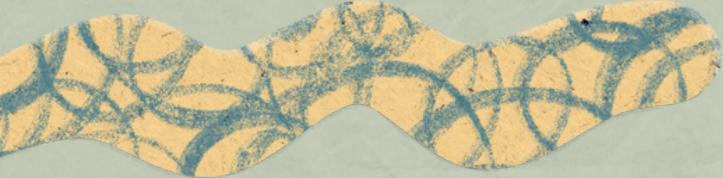


The partnership with Earth4All was born out of a shared faith in storytelling as a powerful tool of advocacy. Only if we are able to lean into our creativity are we able to imagine a different and a better future for all.

It is through telling our stories, that we make our voices heard, create opportunity for healing and learning from each other. Young people all over the world are experiencing the climate crisis and their social environments in unique ways. It is also young people that are bringing the issue to the attention of our leaders, and delivering solutions on a local and global level.

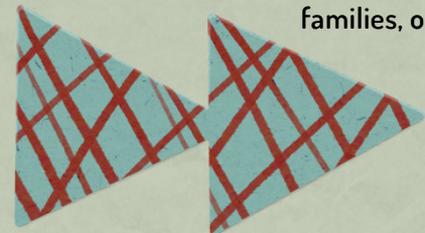
The 50 Percent's Storytelling Fellowship was created to facilitate and encourage dialogue between young people all over the world, as well as to hone the skill of active listening. We have now run three Storytelling Fellowships, with youth from across North and Latin America, Africa, Asia and Europe, with many of them sharing with us that hearing their peers experiences helped them look at an issue they were facing in their community from a different angle, and to find an unexpected solution to it.

Storytelling can also bring us closer, allowing us to understand perspectives different to our own, as well as humanise often abstract and complex challenges, such as the climate crisis. Earth4All's book follows the lives of four girls born in 2020 and examines how their lives would unfold depending on how much action is taken to address climate change and social injustices. In our partnership with Earth4All, we have co-created a workshop on 'storytelling as advocacy', and supported our fellows to develop their own stories, following the two scenarios laid out by Earth4All's modelling. We hope that, by continuing to add to this chorus of voices, we can showcase that another future is possible, that climate action brings with it innumerable benefits, and that our leaders can only gain by acting on it with as much urgency as possible.



"We can't just hope for a brighter day,
we have to work for a brighter day.
Love too often gets buried in a world of hurt and fear.
And we have to work to dig it out so we can share it with our
families, our friends, and our neighbours."

-Dolly Parton



Scenario 1: Too Little Too Late

The 'Too Little Too Late' scenario shows the potential consequences of continuing world development along the same dynamics that we have from 1980 - 2020. In this scenario, we see a somewhat slowing population growth and world economic growth to 2050 and beyond, but also declining labour participation rates, declining trust in government, making it harder for political parties to stay in power and implement long-term policies. We also observe a steady increase of humanity's ecological footprint, and rising loss in biodiversity.

Under this scenario, we would see persistent poverty in Most of the World, and destabilising inequality in the rich world. While some of the Sustainable Development Goals are met, there is a dramatic rise in the Social Tension Index, slowing down the deployment of new solutions. We see no economic turn around, but rather a continuation of the global economic system we have experienced in the last few decades. While this scenario may not result in an overt global ecological or climate collapse in this century, the likelihood of societal collapse rises drastically throughout the decades to 2050. This is a result of deepening social divisions both internal to and between societies and rising environmental damage. The risk is particularly acute in the most vulnerable, badly governed, and ecologically vulnerable economies.

Scenario 2: The Giant Leap

In 'The Giant Leap' scenario, we see governments taking effective action to address climate change and stabilise social challenges. For this to occur, we must see unprecedented transformation. This includes a transformation of international financial institutions such as the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and the World Trade Organisation, which have their mandates drastically shifted to support green transition investments in climate, sustainability, and wellbeing, rather than just economic growth.

Within a decade, these changes have greatly expanded financial resources for low-income countries and improved access to investments in renewables and green industries. These changes also make it possible for governments to raise the wellbeing of their people through investment in education health and infrastructure. Exponential technological development drives down the share of fossil fuels in the energy systems, until they are completely phased out in the decades up to 2050.

Economic inequality becomes widely acknowledged as deeply polarising and a threat to political stability, causing governments to shift to wellbeing economies. There is a broad shift in attitudes in all regions to support the principle that the richest 10% should take less than 40% of national incomes. This is based on the recognition that - whether wealthy or not - fairer societies function better than unfair societies. Progressive income tax ensures the wealthiest contribute more. Wealth taxes introduced in all regions, along with the closing of tax havens, address runaway wealth inequality.

These new revenues allow governments to expand social benefits and adopt a Universal Basic Dividend to help fight inequality, particularly a stimulus during major shocks - like another pandemic. The principle evolves into a Citizens Fund, where industries pay for the use of common resources. This revenue is then re-distributed to all citizens in a country equally.

All nations have agreed to reach net-zero greenhouse gas emissions in this century. Coal power is in free-fall towards net zero in 2050 or earlier. Nations also aim to ramp up dietary changes and regenerative agricultural practices, which improve the health of people and soils.

The 50 Percent Storytelling Fellow Tania Roa developed the timeline for her character Patricia:

Patricia from Quibdó, Colombia

Quibdó means “the place between rivers” in local Indigenous language - it’s located next to the Atrato River that crosses through jungle and ends at Caribbean Sea

Character background: Has two brothers and one sister, raised by a single mother (dad is out of the picture), has an uncle in a gang, mother works as a secretary, mom uses most of their money to pay for private school and encourages all children to go to university. Live in a small apartment with two rooms - girls in one and boys in another.



Timeline: Too Little Too Late

2020: Patricia is excited to go to school. She wants to grow up to be a lawyer, so she can defend her community from foreign interests that have begun to increase investments and development in the region, without benefitting local residents.

2030: Patricia is unsure if she should continue attending school, or drop out so that she can work and help her mom with rent and food. As the eldest, she feels responsible for her siblings. She notices that her mother is growing weak and tired from working so many hours. Her mom denies her health, and Patricia knows it's because the health care they receive is insufficient, but anything more would be too expensive. She doesn't relay her worries to her siblings. Instead, she encourages them to join the limited clubs there are in the area. Her sister joins a local dance team, and her brothers play fútbol. She doesn't want her siblings to join her uncle's gang. Patricia learns to stretch resources as much as possible, considering they have limited clean water.

There is no adequate water storage or sewer system - the city lacks pipelines. Despite having some of the highest rates of rainfall in the world, Quibdó sometimes experiences drought from water mismanagement practices. Rainfall turns into flooding and erosion.

2040: Patricia manages to graduate from university with a law degree. Her mother continues to work one of her secretary jobs at the city administration's office, but her health is quickly deteriorating. One of her brothers ended up joining the gang. The other suffers from severe depression. Her sister fled Quibdó two years ago with her boyfriend to Bogotá, and they haven't heard from her since. Patricia struggles to keep her family healthy and intact. She is now looking for a job with an organization that fights against foreign investors that do not benefit local communities.

Timeline: Too Little Too Late

- Situated between the Caribbean and Pacific coast, along Panama's border, Quibdó is known as one of the gateways between South and Central America, which is perfect for shipping products.
- Quibdó is surrounded by the river, oceans, and mountains. These different landscapes collide to bring about beautiful abundance of natural resources.
- The city continues to be one of the most isolated and poorest in the nation, despite it sitting on a geographical treasure.
- Foreign investments are bringing in high-rise luxury towers with shopping complexes, which are often inaccessible to the city's residents.
- The luxury hotels are giving way to more drug trafficking in the area, leading to more criminal activity.

2050: Patricia's home gets flooded as climate change increases the severity and frequency of rains. Although Quibdó is the capital of the Chocó department, only the city center has concrete buildings and paved streets. Most people, like Patricia, live in shacks made from wood or iron and walk on dirt roads.

Her mother dies after falling ill with multiple illnesses, and both of her brothers are nowhere to be found. Patricia is left to pick up the pieces on her own. The only thing keeping her spirits high is the annual San Pacho Festival, where each neighborhood in the city parades through the streets with their region's music and dance.

2080: Patricia is assassinated by the gang her brother and uncle are a part of for being an activist. She was making strides in organizing the community and getting local government officials elected that were targeting crime and gang activity. The money was finally going towards improving health services, public transportation, and affordable housing. The local gangs were afraid they would lose control if Patricia continued to succeed. They wanted to continue to recruit, now that there is a turf war, which was leading to more homicides - more than the national average. Conflict between FARC, ELN gang and Urabeños leads to higher army presence.

Patricia's legacy continues, as more people begin to speak out against increased violence and inequality in the region. The Colombian national government continues to disregard this region, so people tend to rely on international aid organizations for help.

Timeline: The Giant Leap

2020: Patricia is excited to go to school. She wants to grow up to be a lawyer, so she can defend her community from foreign interests that have begun to increase investments and development in the region, without benefitting local residents.

2030: Patricia is unsure if she should continue attending school, or drop out so that she can work and help her mom with rent and food. As the eldest, she feels responsible for her siblings. She notices that her mother is growing weak and tired from working so many hours. Her mom denies her health, and Patricia knows it's because the health care they receive is insufficient, but anything more would be too expensive. She doesn't relay her worries to her siblings. Instead, she encourages them to join the limited clubs there are in the area. Her sister joins a local dance team, and her brothers play fútbol. She doesn't want her siblings to join her uncle's gang. Patricia learns to stretch resources as much as possible, considering they have limited clean water.

2040: A newly elected national government, the first of its kind in 200 years, invests resources to Quibdó. Foreign investors aren't allowed to develop in the area. Priority is given to local residents. Patricia graduates from university with a law degree. She works as the city attorney to ensure new policies are enforced, money is distributed where it needs to go, and resources are allocated accordingly. Patricia's sister's art gathers the attention of filmmakers from Bogotá, who are now going to make a film on the history of Quibdó with Patricia's family starring. One of her brothers plans on being the soccer coach at the local school, and the other wants to be the school counselor once they graduate. With new health clinics in the area, Patricia's mom is able to receive the care she needs. Patricia's uncle leaves the gang and now lives with the family.

Timeline: The Giant Leap

2050: A new movement to better manage natural resources throughout Colombia leads to a new water management system. Houses are fitted with rain catchment systems that filter water for household use. Pipelines move stormwater from the streets to a city water containment system that recycles the water and uses it for city administration purposes. Floods decrease in the area, and the abundant nature remains intact.

2080: Patricia's mother dies of old age. Quibdó makes international headlines for being one of the most changed cities with successful health services, public transportation, and affordable housing that inspire other cities worldwide to do the same. Recreational opportunities expand, and gang activity decreases dramatically. The army's presence is no longer needed. People live off of sustainably managing the many natural resources in the area. The San Pacho Festival continues to bring everyone together every year.



Combating Conflict in Colombia

by Tania Roa

It's another rainy day in Quibdó, Colombia - nothing Patricia De La Cruz isn't used to. In fact, she stopped needing an alarm clock because now she wakes up to the sound of raindrops hitting the roof. She wakes up excited to go to school, but first, she has to help her younger brothers and sister get ready, too. Her mom, Miriam, woke up really early to go to her second job. As the eldest, Patricia tries to help around the house as much as possible - anything to give her mom moments of peace and rest between cleaning houses and working as a legal secretary, on top of being a single mother. Once everyone is out the door, Patricia can once again focus on her dream to become a lawyer one day.

Patricia has lived in Quibdó her entire life, and she feels a calling to use her education to give back to the community. Quibdó means "the place between rivers" in the local Indigenous language. It's the capital of the Chocó department and lies along the Atrato River that crosses through the jungle and ends at the Caribbean Sea. These different landscapes collide to bring about a beautiful array of natural resources. Despite having some of the heaviest rainfall in the world, Quibdó sometimes experiences drought from water mismanagement practices. Rainfall turns into flooding and erosion, and the city lacks an adequate water storage or sewer system. Although Quibdó sits on a geographical treasure, the city continues to be one of the most isolated in the nation and poverty is all too common. Most people, like Patricia, live in shacks made from wood or iron and walk on dirt roads. City residents learn early on to stretch resources as much as possible, considering they have limited clean water.



In recent years, foreign investors have begun to show interest in the region's development without considering the needs of local residents. Patricia knows foreign developers will continue to look for ways to make Quibdó appealing to their clientele, drastically changing the only town she has ever known and loved. The investors want to construct high-rise luxury towers outfitted with shopping complexes, which would be largely inaccessible to the city's long-time residents. The luxury hotels would make the investors money in two ways: through tourism and by providing infrastructure to expand drug trafficking, therefore leading to more criminal activity. When she becomes a lawyer, Patricia plans to take the large corporations to court to protect her family, neighbors, and the Atrato River, before the town's iconic nature and tight-knit community is destroyed.

Patricia's dreams of going to university and working for the local social justice organization become less realistic when she remembers how her mom can barely pay for rent and put food on the table. She feels guilty for going to school when she should be cleaning houses with her mom and contributing to the household, but Miriam refuses to let her drop out. As someone who was unable to finish school, Miriam motivates all four children to attend university and she works hard - harder than she should have to - to ensure they have the means to do so. Patricia notices that her mother is growing weak and tired from working so many hours, but Miriam denies her health. Patricia knows it's because the health care they receive is insufficient, and any extensive treatments would be too expensive. Neither of them relays their worries to the younger children. Instead, they encourage them to enjoy their childhood.

The De La Cruz boys play fútbol (soccer) after school and Patricia's sister is on the school dance team. Even though Patricia is only two years older than the oldest brother, her maturity makes it seem like there's a ten-year age difference, but she's glad her siblings are passionate about their extracurricular activities. She wants to keep them busy to make sure they don't join their uncle's gang. Criminal activity has become more dangerous ever since the tension between FARC, The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, and various gangs has spiked. It has led to a higher army presence in the area, and many people are worried this may only exacerbate the problem rather than solve it.

For years, the Colombian national government has disregarded this region and the needs of its inhabitants, so Quibdó residents tend to rely on international aid organizations for help. As more people speak out against injustices, violence, and inequality, Patricia joins just in time. A newly elected national government, the first of its kind in 200 years, notices the protests and decides to invest resources in Quibdó. As a result, water management improves drastically. Houses are retrofitted with rain catchment systems that filter water for household use. Pipelines move stormwater from the streets to a city water containment system that recycles the water and uses it for city administration purposes.

The abundant nature remains intact, and floods decrease in the area. The new government also passes a countrywide law preventing foreign companies from developing without the consent of local communities. By proactively investing in a higher quality of life, the government empowers the people, and Patricia is ready to get involved.

After years of hard work and wondering whether or not she'd make it, Patricia receives her long-awaited law degree. Right away, she lands a job as the city attorney to ensure the new national government's policies are enforced. Her team gets rid of corruption and money gets distributed to the people rather than the gangs that would bribe city officials, effectively reducing criminal activity.



Along with the rest of the town, the De La Cruz family enters a new phase. Patricia's sister's dance choreography gathers the attention of filmmakers from Bogotá, Colombia's capital, who are now going to make a film on the history of Quibdó with Patricia's family starring. One of the brothers plans on being the soccer coach at the local school, and the other wants to be the school counselor once they graduate. With new health clinics in the area, Patricia's mom is able to receive the care she needs. Patricia's uncle leaves the gang and now lives with the family.

Within a few years, Quibdó makes international headlines for being one of the top cities for healthcare, public transportation, affordable housing, and sustainability. The city's recent changes inspire governments worldwide to do the same. Thanks to the new city government Patricia is a part of, recreational opportunities across Chocó expand, and gang activity decreases dramatically. The army's presence is no longer needed. Morale is high, with community members feeling proud of all that they've accomplished. With the help of the Colombian government, community leaders like Patricia inspired Quibdó residents of all ages to build a path toward a regenerative future. Colombia's unique biodiversity, found nowhere else on Earth, is now protected. The power once again lies with hard-working citizens instead of foreign companies who lack a connection to the land. Finally, Patricia's family can rest knowing their beloved town wasn't lost. And while it changed, it did so for the better.

Koko

by Gabriel Etim

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Koko is born in the coastal city of Port Harcourt, Nigeria. Usually, the air in the city is laden with soot from flaring gasses, factories and cars; and natural water bodies in and around the city have petroleum floating on their surfaces. But the year Koko is born - during the COVID-19 pandemic - the city is cleaner, and scientists say it is because of the lockdown. However, the lockdown also prevents her mother from going to the run-down local clinic to give birth, where she is sure to get some help, no matter how little. So Koko comes into the world on the floor of the one rented room where her parents live with her two elder brothers. This room is located on the far edge of town, in the waterfront slums where about 500,000 people are living. Researchers say that this number will exponentially increase in the coming years, which will in turn increase the violent cultism that leads to a feeling of insecurity felt around the city.

Young people drift into the city daily from the rural areas to seek jobs, which are fast disappearing or do not even exist. The villages have long been plagued by the environmentally damaging operations of multinational petroleum companies who leave natural gas flaring, farmlands and rivers floating with spilled crude oil, preventing farming and fishing, and causing health hazards. Everyday, Koko's parents leave the slum they live in to go work - her mother to clean offices in the affluent business district and her father to a chemical factory line. While they escape the pungent smell of human and household waste that permeates the atmosphere of the slum, they find themselves in the acidic one that the cars and factories emit in the city center.



But Koko is a child born at a turning point, a time filled with potential. And as though the earth is happy to be appeased by the lockdown, the floods that usually visit the city every year cancel their visit. Scientists predict that if the city goes on as though in lockdown for five more years - with the oil exploration and most carbon-emitting activities stopped, but of course with relief provided - the life expectancy of even the slum dwellers will increase.

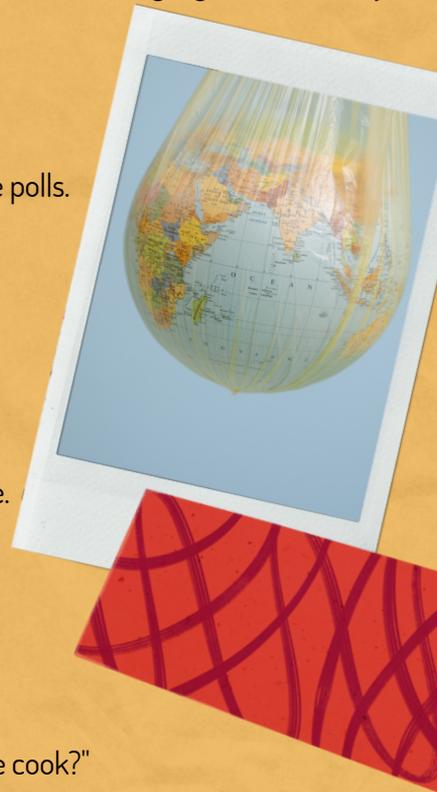
General elections are also around the corner, and citizens demonstrate that they are tired of the old corrupt and incompetent order by staging a protest as the lockdown lifts. The government's attitude towards people during the lockdown - schools being closed, relief material confiscated by selfish politicians - has proven that the government does not care about the people and their needs during a time of crisis. The people share their demands: end inequality and poverty, education for all, better management of crude oil and other resources the country has been blessed with, and environmental restoration. A candidate emerges from the protests whom most agree will take on the people's will in the forthcoming elections. As the elections draw closer, the candidate grows in popularity and Koko's mother becomes hopeful that her daughter will grow up educated. Her husband has always told her that it is enough if they put their two boys through primary school; for him, educating a girl - which they can hardly afford to - is of no use.

1 Too Little Too Late: The "Old New Deal"

In this scenario, Koko's mother's hope is dashed at the polls. The winning candidate turns out to be corrupt; he sees government office as a business.

"When you invest, you expect returns," he says in an interview. To win the election, he has given out cups of rice and cooking oil to his supporters, and violently attacked those who don't support him. The elections are compromised. He uses money from the national purse to enrich himself, send his children to schools abroad, and take regular 'medical' vacations in Europe. He empowers the multinational oil companies to go on with their operations and they compensate him with bribes. But on TV, he boasts that he has entered into "new deals" with oil explorers who have agreed to take action to tackle oil spilling, while highlighting that oil exploration cannot stop since petroleum is "all the county has". "Oil spillage will become a trivial concern," he says. "Don't we all spill a little oil when we cook?"

Now the President goes on with his business-as-usual approach and expects to be celebrated in the media for "the new deal" (now an umbrella name for his greenwashing policies). In the education sector, the new deal refers to a new rule that bans school-age children from being seen on the street during school hours. To circumvent this, child laborers and those unable to go to school, like Koko, simply stay at home till the school hours pass before going out to hawk in traffic. When it comes to the environment, it refers to a rule that fines people caught disposing of waste in the street gutters.



The President boasts it will stop the floods. But since no actual waste management system is created, people simply wait till night before they dispose of their waste the old way. If anything, life is becoming worse, as population rises and insecurity grows. By the time Koko is ten, she has lost two friends to the yearly floods and her brothers have moved out to join cult gangs. She has suffered several bouts of cholera from the pollution in her slum, has learned to make money hawking in the street, and, she has not stepped even one foot in a classroom. It's been her greatest dream to receive an education, to learn and be able to make a better life for herself and her family. She holds onto that dream everyday, impossible as it now seems.

At thirty, she gets married and births twin children. The doctor says that the deformed arm of her son might be a result of the bad working conditions she endures in a detergent factory she now works at. She has worked so hard and has endured so much that she starts having concerning aches in her heart and bones. But she has also made enough money to enroll in an evening adult education class. Her prompt to have a taste of this long-held dream is her parents' successive deaths; life, she thinks, runs out fast, faster if you have disturbing aches all over your body. Koko understands that in this city, tomorrow is not sure. Indeed, the population has doubled, and crime and murder is on the rise. So is poverty. The new deal is now old, it's always been. The floods still come, but she is hopeful that she might be able to save some money to send her children at least to a primary school. With that in mind, she quits her continuing education classes.

Koko is not yet fifty when she becomes an "old woman". But she cannot afford to retire, and as she works her health worsens. At work, she fears she will slump and die. But her illness is not what finally kills her, and her preparedness for death doesn't make her less shocked when it comes. She has always known that there are many things that can kill her, many monsters in this city thirsty for her blood - the road accidents, a regular sight on the crowded unregulated roads; the yearly floods that, carrying more crude oil residue and unchecked waste than before, has become more dangerous; the lung cancer that kills her mother; the factory accident that kills her father. People rarely hear of these kinds of death, that a machine meant for mixing or crushing a certain product can do the same to a man, trap and squeeze him into a tender mangled mass. Or imagine that in a factory nearby a chemical tank can leak and squeeze dry the lungs of the now over 10 million people living in the city. The city dwellers do not think about the many ways death is waiting for them, because even to pause and think about it brings you potentially closer to dying of hunger. And so Koko's body is surprised when it receives a stray bullet in a hot afternoon, as she becomes just another victim of two cult gangs fighting. It shakes and spasms as it falls. But before she falls, one thought sprints through her mind, flashy, as though afraid to be caught: That bullet might have been fired by her own brother whom she hasn't seen since he left to join a cult many decades ago.



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Giant Leap: A Real Change

Now could there ever have been a happy ending to Koko's story? Picture this:

Instead of a corrupt leader and the deceiving "new deal", the country sees a better leader come in who is committed to delivering real change, starting work immediately to deliver the demands of the people: end inequality and poverty, education for all, betterments in the oil industry and improvements of the use of the natural resources country was blessed with, and environmental restoration. He does not deny that the beginning will be difficult, but he assures everyone with a clear plan.

Firstly, he enacts serious corruption laws across the country that deter officials from misusing public office, which will ensure that projects are completed and trust in the system is restored. He solicits with the international community to secure previous debt cancellation and to canvas for development funds. His focus with the funds is in sustainable housing and infrastructure development in major cities, as well as new investment in education, all of which will also have a positive outcome to environmental health. In Port Harcourt, new flood-resistant apartment blocks are completed for the slum dwellers within a few years and the waterfront is cleaned up and allowed to heal. The construction brings in jobs but people grumble about the evacuation of the slum. Koko's family has to move too and adapt to living in blocks of flats and to the strict sanitary and waste management rules. Meanwhile, the government invests in the dying heritage of the historic city with the hope of improving the tourism sector and creating jobs.

The government implements educational reforms. The city university's technology department is fully engaged in the construction going on. Research is funded; talented students and faculty are contracted and sponsored abroad on training in order to return to serve the city. The goal is to take the oil wells from foreign hands and to put the country on the technological path to energy transition. The government also announces free primary and secondary education, and Koko is happy to finally be in school. Sustainability takes a central place in the curriculum. Koko works hard and graduates in the top percentile of her secondary school class, being awarded a scholarship to go to university.

Meanwhile, the government has been able to secure a commitment from the oil companies to clean up their operations and make reparations to the city, including building a rail transport network that reduces the carbon emission from the many cars. Even more jobs are created by the rail construction. Less and less young people are joining the cult gangs as they go to work and receive an education, and because the disappearance of the slum destabilizes the gangs' major habitat. Without corruption in public office, projects are completed according to plan and with their completion, people find employment there. The promising economic and living climate draws in foreign investors and even more sponsorship from the international community and affluent individuals in forms of expertise and money. The country still incurs some debt from its investment activities, but thanks to a thriving steady-state economy it is in a good place to pay this back.

Since the changes are widely-spread across the country, the city's population growth is not unbearable. With functioning transport systems, stable electricity, and equitable housing, an enabling economic environment is experienced by the city dwellers. Due to cultural shifts and a renewed sense of appreciation of the natural environment, as well as an in-depth understanding of how human activity impacts our environment, thanks to the new education curriculum, it has now become a shameful thing to dispose of rubbish on the street, so much so that the police is no longer required to enforce this. The yearly floods are so inconsequential they are fast becoming folklore.



By this time Koko has clocked thirty. She has finished a masters degree and is working in development policy, applying her expertise to parts of the country still struggling. It is a moderately well-paying job, but it is fulfilling - a job for the people. Often she thinks about the housing, environmental, and educational policies that changed her life, and is even happier to pay her taxes and contribute her quota to bettering other lives. She marries her best friend from university and they buy a house together and have two children.

At sixty, she witnesses the city's full transition to renewable energy. Koko has no worries of death, and in fact she lives twenty more years before dying peacefully in her sleep.

Ikram

by Martha Ninov



In 2021, Ikram was born in the mountain village on the edge of the Sahara, while the Tunisian president decided to close the parliament in order to establish social peace. Hardly anyone was interested in his subsequent speech - the classical Arabic words were meaningless. In the mountain village on the edge of the Sahara, people preferred to speak dialect. They were proud of the many different words for the rain and the colors that lit up the sand dunes. In the year when the president closed the parliament, however, it had rained heavily there only twice. Insufficient rainfall had already halved the olive and fig harvests, and consequentially also the village population. New to the village instead were the frantic tourists who came to photograph the stars, and whose stories and words like "business idea" and "natural capital" created a rising sense of inequality.

In a too little too late scenario, Ikram will leave the village as a child. In 2026, the first time it doesn't rain at all, the changing weather will cause the family's cooling cave house to collapse. Despite the money sent by cousins living in Europe, the family will move to the horizonless capital. Ikram will help her parents sell traditional mountain food on the streets. It will not taste the same as in the mountains.

She will write stories at first, but then realize that social peace here means a brutal police force beating out the dreams of the perspective-less with clubs. Her parents will become taciturn, their vocabulary used to the endlessness of the desert, do not find room in the constricted spaces they now live in. And so Ikram will forget the many words for rain and the colors of the sand dunes. She will learn the story of her uncle, who died in deportation custody during a hunger strike, and will still eventually take a boat across the rising Mediterranean. If she survives, she will still never arrive anywhere because no one will ever hear her story.

She will have no room for her words, but will be just another story from the "Global South"

Even in a Giant Leap Scenario, Ikram will migrate. But as a young woman who longs for the world and feels that the world also longs for her, she will travel until she has collected all the words and stories that she longs for since leaving the vastness of the desert. Sitting back on the sand dunes, she will find a language in the silence of the desert for those moments when she had no language. Under the olive trees, she will tell the children about it, who will continue to spin the stories.

The olive trees will also guarantee social peace: in 2040, people will decide that there is no need for the president, but only for stomachs filled with dates and pomegranates, so that people can listen to each other in the shade of the olive trees and make decisions together after exchanging visions. Ikram will continue to run her mother's vegetable garden, exchanging ideas about traditional irrigation systems and seeds on a digital network during the midday heat. Most of all, though, she will continue to share stories and words: Every morning, under the olive tree, she will host a meeting that she will broadcast to the wider world via zoom, titled "Stories and the Sovereignty of Interpretation." She will find joy in bringing the Sahara to life in people's minds. She will exchange ideas with people from forests the different shades of green, she will debate with people from other deserts the different types of rain, she will tell about the life in the desert. She will share the meaning of her name and learn the meaning of other names. She will teach her daughter to leave her own name and words behind from time to time, and open herself to the stories of others. Her daughter will recite her own poem at her funeral, "The things we touch touch us back. Stories we see, see us back. Words we hear, hear us back."

