

THE WIDENING CIRCLE

Campaign for a Global Citizens Movement

2013 - 2015 Strategy

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*The Widening Circle (TWC) is a **campaign** to nurture, support, and advance a **global citizens movement** for a **Great Transition**. TWC brings together individuals and organizations who, while continuing their independent efforts, simultaneously recognize the need for a higher-order synergy. The complexity and scope of the task of a global transition requires a process of co-creation that encompasses territories and themes within a coordinated effort. For more information, see www.wideningcircle.org.*

1. WHY WE NEED AN ACTIVE AND COORDINATED CAMPAIGN

A momentous challenge: navigating the Planetary Phase

The world's increasing interdependence and emerging mutuality continues to erode cultural and geographic boundaries, entwining places and people in a convergent global system with a shared collective destiny. We have entered the Planetary Phase of Civilization, a new historic era that carries unprecedented challenges and demands a deep shift in the direction of development. A dangerous chasm has opened between the imperatives of the Planetary Phase and the ways of thinking and acting that persist from the past. Failing to close the gap invites a slide toward catastrophe and barbarism.

A hopeful vision: Great Transition

These are anxious times that are also imbued with opportunities. Our common treasury of wealth in know-how, the heritage of the whole human family, has grown vast enough to heal the earth, vanquish poverty, and create a planetary civilization of secure, just, and diverse places. But realizing this vision will take the emergence of forms of consciousness and democratic institutions that reflect the condition of the twenty-first century: humanity and Earth are one community of fate. This *Great Transition* (GT) envisions profound transformations in the organizing principles of society rooted in new values emphasizing human solidarity, affinity with nature, and quality of life. This new paradigm seeks to change the character of planetary civilization, validating cultural cross-fertilization, economic connectedness, and the rights of communities to meet global responsibilities in diverse ways.

Overcoming the market paradigm and current growth obsession: The Great Transition clearly distances itself from the idea that our current global crises can be solved within the rationale of today's dominant economic and political institutions. It calls for fundamentally reinventing and redefining what we call progress and how to achieve it. The market rationale and its competitive pressure for economic growth have now invaded most of our spheres of life and have contributed to the current spiritual, ecological, and social crisis that cannot be solved through technical fixes, but requires a much more fundamental approach. In the Great Transition, markets and the rationale of the 'homo economicus' play a far less dominant role than they do today.

Not just localism: The Great Transition clearly acknowledges and demands the development of more localized economic structures that would bring about positive effects on all three types of crises (ecological, social, spiritual), but it also concludes that the sole bottom-up approach of developing new economic models in niches, mostly at the local level in itself won't bring the necessary change. Humanity is too interdependent to be able to solve its problems just through localism and community action. We need a planetary governance system that allows us to tackle our global problems and to manage our global commons together as a planetary community.

From a vision to life: going beyond civil society fragmentation

What historic agency can bring this vision to life? Undoubtedly, many different kinds of players will contribute: activists, educators, scientists, and progressive elements from labor, business, government, faith communities, and other cultural institutions. More than ever, we need to draw lessons and solidarity from the efforts of the past – campaigns for rights, equality, peace, and environment; scientific research on global change; educational and public awareness projects; local efforts to live sustainably. Partial and dispersed actions are necessary, but not sufficient, for winning the systemic shift to a just and sustainable mode of global development.

In the absence of an overarching vision and strategy, systemic deterioration on a larger scale may overwhelm painstaking gains in specific territories and on particular themes.

A critical actor: the global citizens movement

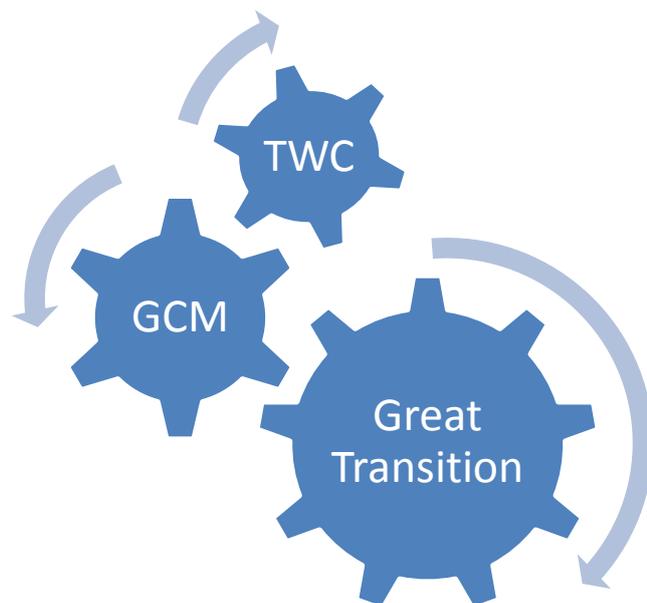
We urgently need the coalescence of a diverse popular movement of engaged citizens the world over, a movement that weaves together these many themes and projects into a holistic vision and strategy. A critical social actor is missing from the global stage: a powerful and coherent movement expressing a supranational identity and building new institutions for a planetary age. Such a *Global Citizens Movement* (GCM) would work on all fronts, understanding the various struggles for the environment and justice, as well as the search for meaningful and responsible ways of living in our interdependent world, as different expressions of a common project. It would understand itself as an explicit and proactive advocate for a planetary civilization worthy of the name.

Catalyzing the GCM

A global movement that engages masses of people for a *Great Transition* remains latent, ready to be born. But can it crystallize with sufficient speed and scale? It would be comforting to believe that it could emerge spontaneously, with little proactive direction. But there are hardly guarantees – and misplaced faith in the potential for bottom-up self-organization carries the tragic risk of opportunity lost. Awakening this movement begs for a focused and directed effort. Therefore, we have launched **The Widening Circle** (TWC) as a new organizing initiative with the explicit aim of catalyzing the GCM, a sustained campaign that will spread across territories and themes through ever- “widening circles.”

TWC’s unique proposition

TWC is not the GCM itself – it is a catalyzing campaign to advance a GCM. It aims to bring coherence to the global movement by fostering a shared vision, an effective strategy, and a “politics of trust” that seeks to balance unity and pluralism on the road to our common future. TWC nurtures the idea and practice of global citizenship, while actively promoting unified action in civil society. Corresponding to the polycentric character of the GCM, the core structure of TWC is built on an expanding set of globally-allied semi-autonomous regional and thematic circles linked through representative global circles.



2. THE NEXT PHASE: OBJECTIVES AND GOALS

TWC has passed through two distinct phases. A **Conceptual Stage** (2002-2010) saw the formulation of the Great Transition scenario and identification of a GCM as the critical change agent. The **Pilot Stage** (2010-2012) – “TWC 1.0” – introduced and began the definition of the campaign. This stage established the soundness of the conceptual framework and began preparing the ground for a more ambitious next phase. On this foundation, the time is ripe for moving the campaign forward into a three-year **Deployment Stage** (“TWC 2.0”).



To significantly advance a coherent and vital GCM, TWC needs to decisively move the campaign to a higher level of intensity that attracts participation from all geographic and demographic groups, links with allied movements, and inspires large numbers of people the world over. This bold effort calls for a dynamic organization with strong and committed leadership, management and staff, and adequate resources.

Strengthening the circles

TWC explores alternative forms of organizing to overcome the inertia within the current architecture of institutional forms and structures. The core challenge is to nurture both unity and diversity by multiplying and strengthening TWC’s associated circles. The focus is on building thematic circles around key issues and struggles, and regional circles organized on a geographical basis (described further below). The development of these nodes, by advancing the GCM in diverse settings, is the essence of the “widening circle” strategy. This strategy has the learning objective of exploring how networks of change could become systems of influence and contribute towards advancing action. The lessons generated would also contribute towards appreciating how ‘intentional communities of practice’ could be cultivated.

In this regard, the United Nations’ major three-year process for setting sustainable development goals (SDGs) provides a major opportunity for jump starting TWC, while providing near-term, tangible contributions to strengthening the coherence of civil society input. TWC will make a priority of engaging individuals and groups focused on specific sectors and themes that seek to elaborate a global developmental discourse, and advancing an integrated, synergistic set of recommendations to the SDG process. This process will establish and strengthen TWC thematic circles, building a strong basis for ongoing interchange within the umbrella of the holistic TWC community. This effort will be initiated in the coming year around the sessions of the SDGs Open Working Groups, which offers a major opportunity to support existing coalitions help new ones form for the ongoing 2015 process.

An intensive effort of mapping the landscape of candidate thematic and regional groups, outreach, and building relationships with catalytic leaders will drive this process.

Building synergies

TWC will identify and support allied campaigns and movements across the world, cultivating partnerships and dialogues for advancing the global citizens movement.

Establishing effective management and operations

To design, implement, and manage its ambitious organizing and action program, TWC 2.0 will strengthen its management and operational capacity. Key to this is the designation of an effective, committed, and well-connected executive leader (Coordinator), operating with the support of a strong staff and under the guidance of a high-level team of TWC stewards (Council of Stewards [CoS]).

Learning Outcomes

An important aspect of TWC's adaptive approach is to learn how social activism can work across different spatial and thematic dimensions, to disseminate this insight, and to adjust its strategy to better advance the network-coalition for bringing about the Great Transition.

Securing financial resources

TWC requires resources to conduct its expanding campaign of supporting people and projects for advancing the movement. Consequently, TWC leadership will actively and continuously build its funding base by engaging donors and allies for core support, and developing proposals for specific program and project elements. It aims to be financially sustainable within three years.

3. ORGANIZATIONAL ARCHITECTURE

A set of interconnected "circles" serve as the functional elements and of TWC.

Operational Circles

TWC's core operations are conducted through three types of circles with Thematic Circles and Regional Circles the foci of activity. Thus, the expansion strategy centers on (a) engaging existing circles and (b) creating and facilitating new circles, with the aim of building diversity through appropriate representation from the global South, women, and youth.

- **Thematic Circles (TC):** TCs focus on critical issues for a Great Transition. Each maintains its own program, while collaborating with other TWC elements and the global TWC process. As activists increasingly see the need to link their efforts to a systemic movement, TWC can attract many existing groups and movements on the themes of sustainability, justice, and peace. TWC provides a platform for advancing dialogue and building global unity among these circles.
- **Regional Circles (RC):** These geographically-defined groups operate at continental, regional, sub-regional, national, and local levels, their boundaries defined by the circles themselves. RCs work to advance the GCM and GT in their places by mounting campaigns, creating alternative scenarios, and promoting awareness and action. Through TWC, community circles can link to each other and to national and regional circles. RCs will form a powerful outreach network for spreading the TWC message and building the GCM. TWC will work toward establishing regional coordinating centers charged with developing a community of circles in each region. Small grants to existing organizations will be made to catalyze the development of these regional coordinating centers as nodes for regionally-specific activity, fund-raising, and discourse.
- **Council of Stewards (CoS):** The CoS is the *Board of Directors* of TWC, responsible for policy decisions, governance determinations, strategic direction setting, and overall financial oversight. Membership of the CoS is drawn from the other Circles and will not exceed seven members. Thus, the CoS is constituted as a small empowered and committed group who will oversee the management, programs, and activities of TWC.

Leadership & management

Building the TWC campaign requires dedicated leadership and solid organization.

- **TWC Coordinator:** Appointed by the CoS, the TWC Coordinator is chief executive of the organization, director of the staff, administrator of the TWC Center, and manager of program and campaigns. The TWC Coordinator is the primary focal point and spokesperson of the organization under the oversight of the CoS.
- **Registered non-profit organization:** TWC will be registered as a non-profit organization as provided for by the laws of USA.
- **TWC Center:** The TWC Center will provide a physical location for the campaign. A rented office with a full-time staff under the aegis of the Coordinator will manage TWC activities and communications. The initial staff may include an Office Manager, Funding Coordinator, and Communications Officer. The TWC Center will initially be located in New York City to facilitate regular interaction with global activists and organizations, multilateral agencies, and donors. The Center will serve as a space for dialogue and campaigns, hosting events for widening the circles and advancing the GCM.

4. ACTION ELEMENTS

Outreach and communications

- **Database and mailing list server:** An evolving contact list of organizations and individuals for potential collaboration and membership will be placed in a database, with a mapping process providing the required information. This expanding database will be a powerful outreach mailing list server.
- **Information pack:** Information material in print and online will be creatively designed to engage target audiences worldwide on core concepts: Great Transition, global citizenship, and movements for change. The information pack will be translated into multiple languages for broad regional access. Short videos and interviews will be placed on a YouTube TWC channel.
- **Interactive website:** An informative, creative, and interactive website will engage circles and collaborators in regular dialogues in a co-learning process on global vision and strategy. The website will have modern social communication tools and features required for managing a complex campaign. This platform will open joint undertakings of various kinds across cultures and places.
- **News and media service:** A TWC news service, reporting through various social and conventional media, will widely publicize issues and activities. Information will be sourced from TWC Circles. Media releases and articles by invited opinion makers will spread the message.
- **Events:** Side events and workshops will be organized at larger conferences organized by the United Nations or other international organizations to make the presence of TWC felt and to attract potential members. TWC campaigns and projects will design special events to promote awareness and build public support.

Campaigns and advocacy

- **Joining global campaigns:** At the global scale, TWC will actively participate in campaigns that seek to advance the ideals of a global citizens movement.
- **Initiating advocacy campaigns:** In addition, TWC from time-to-time will initiate campaigns of its own. Such campaigns will be carefully selected for impact the need to build cooperation.

Programs and projects

- **Bi-Annual conference and General Assembly:** A bi-annual TWC conference will become a key public relations activity to showcase progress, widen the circle, and revise strategies. Coupling the conference with a larger global event will provide a core audience, defray participant costs, and ensure media presence. The theme of each conference will reflect the focus for the coming year's activities, engaging respected leaders in that specific area of concern. A TWC General Assembly (GA) will be held on the final day of the conference. The GA will be identifying new members for the CoS, and other policy or personnel questions the assembly elects to consider. The TWC Center with a project team will manage the event as a flagship project of TWC.
- **On-line Newsletter:** TWC will use on-line publishing both as a source of information and forum for the GCM. The newsletter will target both intellectual and activist readerships with evolving ideas on the GT vision and pathway, providing a context for dialogue and debate. Although English will be the main editorial language, the newsletter will be translated into other major languages in order to reach diverse audiences. A project team will be established to provide editorial and design capacity.

Financing and operations

- **Fund-raising:** The TWC Center will have primary responsibility for conducting the fund-raising effort for the core program and operations of TWC. The Coordinator, CC, and Staff will identify potential foundations, individual givers, and funding agencies, prepare initial submissions, formulate presentation material, and seek funding. In addition, project leaders will act as the primary focal point for developing and seeking funding for project-specific proposals.
- **Resource sharing:** TWC will act to ensure that resources are utilized in ways which maximize sharing and cooperation.
- **Boundaries of association:** To maintain its credibility and trust, TWC will ensure that its funding is transparent and ethically sourced.
- **Code of ethics and conduct:** TWC will be guided by values and principles that support accountability, dignity, diversity protection, fairness, good governance, honesty, integrity, justice, respect and transparency.
- **Self-financing:** The TWC will aim to be self-financed within three years, relying primarily on participant contributions.

5. TIMELINE

The chart below indicates the preparatory process and flow of tasks for the 2013-2015 TWC strategy. Budget for the core program is available on request (separate proposals will be developed for conferences and specific TWC projects).

ACTIVITY	ITEM	2013				2014				2015						
		QTR-01	QTR-02	QTR-03	QTR-04	QTR-01	QTR-02	QTR-03	QTR-04	QTR-01	QTR-02	QTR-03	QTR-04			
Operations	Fundraising	Outreach to funders				Proposals for special projects										
	Registration	File File 501 c				Annual Report				Annual Report						
	Management					Staff employed and program ramped up										
	TWC Center					Preparation		Center in operation		Ongoing program and events						
Expansion	Mapping	→														
	Expanding Circles					25 circles				50 circles				75 circles		
Meetings	CofS	Conf call	Conf call	Meeting	Conf call	Conf call	Conf call	Meeting	Conf call	Conf call	Conf call	Meeting	Conf call			
	Conference					→				→						
	e-dialogues	→														
	International	Presence in SDG 2015 process and other major convenings														
Projects	Actions	Conduct targeted campaigns and projects in conjunction with allies														
	e news	Bimonthly publication on activities, upcoming events, significant developments														
	Communications	Website, information packs, media releases, presentations, awareness building programmes														