

# ECOLOGIST

**THE ECOLOGIST  
STRATEGY 2023-6**



An activist joins the Pan-African Rebellion Groundings protest to mark African Emancipation Day in Brixton, London, in 2021.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*The Ecologist* online is a news and analysis website focussed on environmental, social and economic justice. *The Ecologist* was founded in 1970 and has earned recognition and trust across the environment movement in the UK by advocating for systemic change and delivering hard-hitting investigative journalism. *The Ecologist* is today owned and managed by The Resurgence Trust, a registered educational charity, and has a dedicated programme staff of 1.5 full-time equivalent (FTE). The Editor leads the Programme Team and reports to the Management Team.

*The Ecologist* online publishes daily news and analysis, raising awareness of a broad range of environmental and social justice concerns, and amplifying the voices of environmental campaigners and advocates, including those representing or from marginalised communities. *The Ecologist* recently celebrated its 50th anniversary and wants to take this opportunity to launch a new environmental economics project. This project will publish writers who are challenging the current economic growth paradigm that is driving climate breakdown, conflict and biodiversity collapse. It will also promote alternative sustainable and regenerative economic theories and policy initiatives. *The Ecologist* online programme currently has a budget of £74,000 a year - met through income from syndication, royalties, advertising and support from The Resurgence Trust. We aim to raise an additional £70,000 per year for three years, restricted to delivering our new environmental economics project.

“WITHOUT SOCIAL JUSTICE THERE CAN BE NO ECOLOGICAL JUSTICE.”

Satish Kumar,  
Resurgence Trust founder,  
*Resurgence & Ecologist*,  
2020

# AIM

The aim of *The Ecologist* is to educate members of the public concerned about environmental crises about the need for a radical transformation of our global economies.



# MISSION

*The Ecologist* has warned about the impact of industrial societies on the biosphere for more than five decades, and has presented radical solutions that would meet human needs as well as protecting and restoring the natural environment. *The Ecologist* from the beginning adopted systems theory and amplified the work of The Club of Rome to develop a vision of a sustainable world, with its *Blueprint for Survival* selling more than 600,000 copies worldwide. This mission continues today, learning from contemporary discussions centred on environmental, social and economic justice. *The Ecologist* aims to serve the entire environmentalist community, adding value by providing free educational materials about systems theory, thermodynamic economics, the fossil fuel economy and regenerative alternatives from degrowth policies to Green New Deals. The environment movement has, because of climate breakdown, become increasingly aware and concerned about the impacts of the fossil fuel economy on society and on nature. *The Ecologist* provides information that is vital to all the campaigns attempting to end the fossil fuel economy and usher in an era of renewable energy and regenerative economics.

“CLIMATE ACTIVISTS ARE SOMETIMES DEPICTED AS DANGEROUS RADICALS, BUT THE TRULY DANGEROUS RADICALS ARE THE COUNTRIES THAT ARE INCREASING THE PRODUCTION OF FOSSIL FUELS.”

António Guterres, United Nations Secretary-General, Twitter, 2022

# VALUES

Justice. Integrity. Empathy.

## VISION

We look forward to a future where human societies design and develop economies that are inherently just. We demand that those in power – in corporations and in government – demonstrate integrity. We see the possibility of developing economic systems that free human beings from what William Morris described as “useless toil” while also having a positive impact on the biosphere. We see a future with no fossil fuel economy – with no extraction, no exploitation and no colonialism. We in turn demonstrate our own commitment to justice, integrity and empathy in our journalism and organisational practice.

“WE WANTED TO BUILD A DIVERSE (CLIMATE) MOVEMENT TO PUT JUSTICE – SOCIAL, ECOLOGICAL, RACIAL AND GENDER – AT ITS HEART, AND BE A POWERFUL VOICE TO HOLD RICH COUNTRIES TO ACCOUNT FOR CAUSING THE CRISIS.”

Asad Rehman, War on Want, The Guardian, 2021

## OBJECTIVES

To educate the public about:

1. The impacts of the fossil fuel economy on our societies and the global biosphere.
2. The history of the evolution of the current global fossil fuel economy and its methods of obtaining a social licence to operate.
3. The different economic theories that exist, and how the adoption or neglect of these theories determines our social impact on the natural environment.
4. Systems theory as a useful analytical tool for understanding a wide variety of environmental concerns, including those related to fossil fuels.
5. The successes of the frontline activism, advocacy and campaigns currently taking place to stop the direct harms from the fossil fuel economy.
6. The visions and proposals moving us towards a “post-fossil fuel economy”.

# THEORY OF CHANGE

We propose a simple, causal explanation of how our work can have a significant impact on the world.

1. We produce and publish strategically useful educational materials about the fossil fuel economy, and its context.
2. We work to ensure that activists read and engage with this material, and that more people become activists as a result of engaging with this material.
3. Activists make even better strategic decisions about how to influence policymakers, corporate executives, energy workers and communities.
4. Activists take more impactful action.
5. We amplify the voices and successes of activists, campaigners and advocates.
6. The environment movement together moves towards helping to create a world that is safe, and just.





“TO AVOID A CLIMATE AND EARTH SYSTEMS BREAKDOWN, A GREEN NEW DEAL CHANCELLOR MUST MOBILISE LARGE SUMS FROM BOTH THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS TO FINANCE THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE BRITISH ECONOMY AWAY FROM ITS DEPENDENCE ON FOSSIL FUELS.”

Ann Pettifor, author, IPPR, 2019

## NEED

The impacts of unregulated capitalist economies on the natural environment globally are devastating, representing an existential threat to human societies and life itself in the medium to long term. These economies have proved to be entirely dependent on the unlimited use of fossil fuels. This in turn drives climate breakdown - with all the harms and risks that have been set out in the latest UN IPCC reports.

The cost of living crisis will leave more than one third of the UK population in absolute poverty, with inflation reaching as much as twenty percent. Hardship is set to get worse, year on year. The environment movement will be confronted with a series of new problems as a result: climate breakdown and other ecological concerns will be relegated down the news agenda; environmental policies will be blamed for the economic crisis; corporations will increase the volume on the ‘environment or jobs’ narrative.

The transition to post-fossil fuel societies is a gargantuan task. All the evidence from current geopolitical events - from the lack of progress at the UN Conference of the Parties (COPs) to the war in Ukraine and the failure to manage the coronavirus pandemic - suggests that political leaders are nowhere near meeting this challenge.

The alternative is international mass participatory action from millions of ordinary people. The problem remains, however, that the change we need is significant and the time we have is extremely limited. There are also opportunities. The cost of energy and gas bills means millions of people are now extremely focused on energy companies, and the fossil fuel economy in general. The heatwaves ‘at home’ in Europe and the devastation of drought and floods everywhere mean the threat of climate breakdown is now viscerally apparent. The Editorial Team of *The Ecologist* online has a small if potentially important role to play in this moment.

*The Ecologist*, as set out in our objectives, can identify, develop and publish the most strategically useful information about the fossil fuel economy, including how it can be understood with the tools of systems theory, heterodox economics and investigative journalism. We also want to provide hope. We can do this by shining a light on activists and their campaigns, by reporting on the alternative economic policies and proposals that have already been developed, and by curating a vision for the future after the fossil fuel era has come to an end.

# METHOD

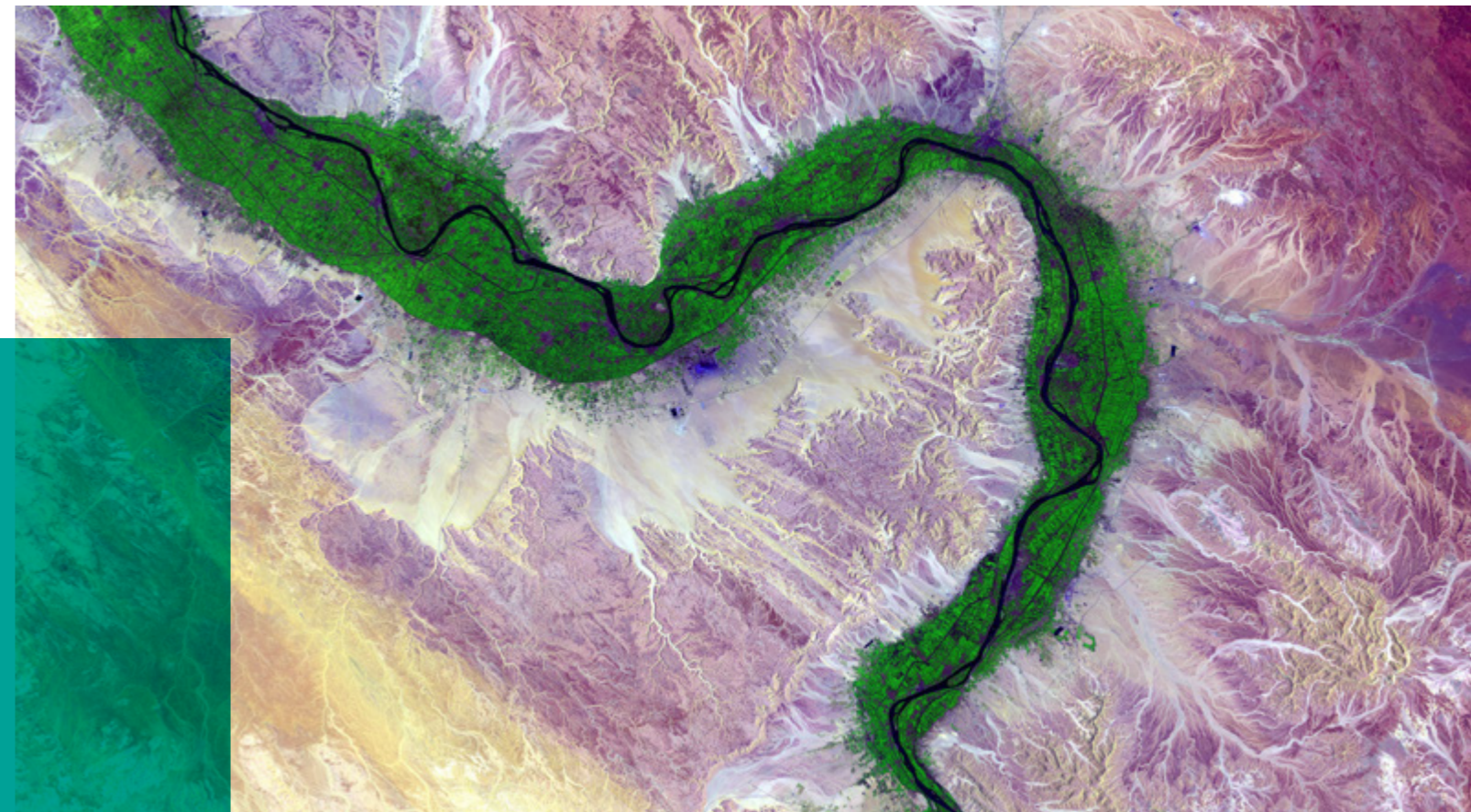
The main method used to meet our objectives is publishing high quality content on our website in the form of news and analysis, making these educational materials available free of charge and then using newsletters, social media and public events to ensure that members of the public are aware of them, as well as supporting people in engaging with these texts. We will signpost our community to the best analysis publicly available, such as books by authoritative writers, reports from leading think tanks, and articles published by other environmental websites. We will work to platform and amplify a diversity of authors representing and highlighting the experiences of communities that are often marginalised and ignored by the mainstream media and wider culture. This includes, but is not limited to, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) and Black, Indigenous and People of Colour (BIPOC) communities, LGBTQIA+ communities and intellectual currents within the social and environmental justice movements.

“I MAJORED IN ECONOMICS, PHILOSOPHY AND POLITICS AT OXFORD, BUT I GRADUALLY BECAME DISILLUSIONED WITH ECONOMIC THEORY AND THE LACK OF DISCUSSION OF TOPICS THAT I REALLY WISHED TO PURSUE, SUCH AS ECOLOGICAL INTEGRITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE.”

Kate Raworth, author, Great Transition Initiative, 2019

# ACTIVITY

*The Ecologist* aims to expand its team to three full-time equivalent (FTE) staff: full-time Editor, an Economics Editor and Assistant Editor. The doubling in capacity will take place over three years. The larger team will create content – news and analysis articles – and publish on our website and in *The Ecologist* section of *Resurgence & Ecologist* magazine. The online articles will be augmented with video, podcasts and social media posts. We want to find where discussions about the fossil fuel economy are taking place and make sure the best educational materials are available in those online and real-world spaces.



# ENVIRONMENTAL ECONOMICS PROJECT

*The Ecologist* aims to create a new Economics Editor role and expand its small editorial team by meeting the costs in the first three years through grants from trusts and foundations. The Economics Editor will be responsible for producing authoritative and informative essays and articles. These will tend to have a news hook – such as reporting on the UK government’s energy strategy – while also introducing broader economic concepts and themes, such as ‘degrowth’ or ‘externalities’. Further, the Economics Editor will educate colleagues so that their content is accurate and highly informative from an economics perspective.

## CONTENT

The content of *The Ecologist* online for the duration of this strategy will be the product of five streams of work:

1. News and analysis highlighting the best positive proposals for alternatives to the fossil fuel industry.
2. News items about the economy, and in particular the fossil fuel economy.
3. An investigation into the UK fossil fuel economy, including discussion of the UK energy infrastructure and also the overseas countries, economies and corporations that extract and export energy to the UK.
4. A series of papers authored by Professor Herbert Girardet, titled *Megamorphosis: A Guide to Regenerative Planetary Change*, examining the crises impacting the biosphere.
5. A series of articles presenting a philosophical study of energy through systems theory to help explain climate breakdown, human societies, economics, and organisational change.



# OUTPUTS

## DAILY

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*The Ecologist* online will publish one article each weekday for 51 weeks a year, excluding only the Christmas and New Year holiday week.

## SPECIAL ISSUES

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### Digital

The publication schedule will include a number of monthly special issues, including from the series produced by Brendan Montague and Professor Herbert Girardet.

### Print, *Resurgence & Ecologist*

The editor of *The Ecologist* online will work with the editor of the *Resurgence & Ecologist* magazine, Marianne Brown, to produce a special themed issue of the print magazine focussed on energy.

## EVENTS

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*The Ecologist* online will host a series of events in Bristol and London, in partnership with other organisations. The series will include three events per year for the three-year duration of the strategy. The events will be structured around the thesis, antithesis and synthesis structure of logical inference. The events will be aimed at activists with a high knowledge of and engagement with environmental issues and concerns. The editorial team of *The Ecologist* will design the content of the events and will work with the Management Team and Events Team to deliver the events.



## OUTCOMES

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*The Ecologist* online programme and its publications will educate environmental activists, giving them the tools they need to meet the profound challenges they face. We want to skill up and train activists with economically sound facts, theories and systems. This will in the first instance allow them to work within their communities (geographically, or for example in campaign settings) by presenting an optimistic vision for the future, based on sound economic arguments and proposals. Secondly, this work should help ‘inoculate’ the public against political spin and oil industry disinformation about job creation or the trickle-down benefits of deregulation.

# CAPACITY

## THE TEAM

*The Ecologist* online has a small editorial team of currently 1.5 FTE. The Editorial Team also benefits from the support and advice of colleagues across The Resurgence Trust, as detailed opposite.

## EDITORIAL

**Marianne Brown** is Editor of *Resurgence & Ecologist* magazine and leads the Editorial Team at The Resurgence Trust.

**Yasmin Dahnoun** is Assistant Editor of *The Ecologist* online and Editorial Assistant of *Resurgence & Ecologist* magazine.

**Satish Kumar** is Editor Emeritus of *Resurgence & Ecologist* and *The Ecologist* online, and a member of the Management Team of The Resurgence Trust.

**Brendan Montague** is Editor and Programme Manager for *The Ecologist* online.

## OPERATIONS

**Angie Burke** is Trust Manager at The Resurgence Trust.

**Mark Gough** is Finance and Operations Manager at The Resurgence Trust.

**Professor Herbert Girardet** is a Trustee of The Resurgence Trust.

# CONCLUSION

*The Ecologist* has served the environment movement for more than 50 years. The publication has been warning since 1970 that our industrial civilisation is causing immense damage to the biosphere and that this would have devastating impacts. The fact that as many as 50 million people have been displaced by flooding in Pakistan in September 2022, and that a nuclear power plant is now at the centre of a warzone, while the Amazon rainforest has stopped being a sink for carbon emissions, demonstrate that such warnings were well founded. But we take no consolation from being proved right. The work of ending the destruction of the environment and the exploitation of billions of human beings remains undone. *The Ecologist* has a small but important role to play. This strategy will focus our resources on developing a clear and accessible analysis of the fossil fuel economy as the main driver of ecological collapse. We will create educational materials about the economic, social and environmental transformation that is now urgently required. *The Ecologist* will publish news, analysis and theory that will support activists, campaigners and academics on the frontline. In doing so, we will support the work of recruiting more people to the movement and ensuring that our work is as strategic and as impactful as is humanly possible. *The Ecologist* has a small, dedicated team. With the support of trusts and foundations, and with further crowdfunding from our readers and supporters, we can double our capacity and greatly enhance this work.



