Changing the game for biodiversity - communicating for transformational change
Discussion note

Mobilizing the masses: Reflections from the People's Climate March

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Scene-Setting
- **2 years out from the Paris Summit** -- seen as a pivotal milestone in the fight against climate change.
- **But the movement was in disarray** - Copenhagen had lead to a fracturing. We'd become zero-sum, spending more time arguing amongst ourselves over policies/strategies/tactics than we did building trust, commonality, and our political power.
- We knew we needed to come together like never before, to maximise the pressure on our leaders, and the process, to deliver. **The question was: "how?"**

How did we do it?
- **Nothing happens without a vision**: something that is short, sticky and carries -- The Biggest Climate March in history. But you have to start small - great visions come from small groups, not big consultations.
- **Crisitunities**: what is the blend of crisis and opportunity? World leaders are coming to New York, we can greet them. Crisis gives you urgency, opportunity gives you hope, which is a much cleaner emotive core to come from than anger, or moral indignation.
- **Have a reader Focused Theory of Change:** our governments keep saying "where's the mass movement on climate change" let's show them we're here.
- **Open source organising** -- new principles to change the culture of organising. Rather than spending month's negotiating a political declaration, let's spend that time and energy organising! Open source principles (see below) changed the culture from zero sum, to non-zero. Drawing from the improv comedy principle of "yes and..." instead of "but, no".
- **Storytelling --** Marshall Ganz with the Obama 2008 campaign showed the power of storytelling so effectively: story of self, story of us, story of now. Making people feel part of a broader narrative, that connects, deeply, with their own. "To Change Everything, it takes Everyone" was our story of now. But we all had different paths to get there, and that was celebrated.

And it worked -- PCM by the numbers

- 400,000 at the NYC People's Climate March
- 50,000 registered students
- 617 Buses, trains & vans came to NYC
- 2,646 events in 162 countries
- 1574 organizations involved, including 80 labor unions
- 4 miles long, 4 hours and 5 minutes for the march to pass midtown
- 13,000 total news hits
- 4,400 mention clean energy
- 409,796 tweets during the week of 9/21
- 8.8 million people total Facebook reach via 630,822 likes, comments, shares
- 50% heard about march via a friend or family
- 60% had never been to a 'political' action before.

Learnings for Biodiversity:

- Building unity from culture - don't focus on differences, focus on what we have in common.
- The more you go into complexity the more you lose emotive core - and it is emotions that inspire people to act.
- Short and snappy is the key - cut the jargon. Put forward the inspiring vision in less than 120 characters!
- Tell a story, and allow people to find their place in it.

Principles of Open Source Organising

From the Woman's March to Ende Gelende, a new model of "open source" organising is emerging that celebrates the diversity of leadership, flattens out and distributes power structures, and focuses on results. It's proven highly effective at mobilizing large numbers of unusual suspects on short timelines, especially when a simple common goal is articulated. An open source approach need not replace traditional organizing models, but can complement them. Here are some principles to guide effective open source organizing:

1. Big Tent - Once there is common goal and other basic common elements, for instance a commitment to non-violence, those who support that goal are welcome to contribute to the effort.

2. Distributed Leadership - While parts of the movement may offer tools, processes and ideas that are valuable to others, there is no single central authority that has power over the whole. All are welcome to take leadership and contribute in the ways they choose.

3. Non-Zero Sum Thinking - Open source movements work well when participants celebrate and embrace the contributions of others to the common goal. Each contribution is seen as adding to, _not threatening or diminishing_, other contributions.

4. Autonomy - Each person, organization, or group of organizations is free to contribute as they feel is right for them.

5) Pluralism - many organizations and individuals will choose to associate into groups around common goals within the overall mission. Different structures with different sets of rights and obligations will work best for different groups, and a plurality of these is a strength of the movement.

6) Common Goods Stewardship - Common goods, such as the goal, are ideally decided at the outset. Movements also benefit from common goods like communication channels or 'open spaces' in which to share ideas, as well suggestions for strategy and coherence. Anyone should be able to offer these goods, but they should be offered in a way that protects the open source spirit of the movement.