

Going Global Initiative: The Role of Personal and Community Power in Shifting Cultural Consciousness

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ABSTRACT The *Going Global* workshops emerged from the theory and practice of Carl Rogers' person-centred approach. They are specifically influenced by Rogers' ground-breaking developmental work with large group process and his specialized application of it to working with groups in conflict. This article is written by the team which created the *Going Global* workshops and provides an historical context for our work and an exploration of the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that are required to increase communication, promote peace, and reduce interpersonal and intercultural violence. Copyright © 2016 John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

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INTRODUCTION AND REFLECTION — CAROL WOLTER-GUSTAFSON

Carl R. Rogers is known for developing client-centred therapy, based on the ground-breaking research he conducted on the process of psychotherapy, for which he won the American Psychological Association's first Distinguished Scientific Contribution award. He was an original founder of the *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*. Fewer know his seminal group work with veterans returning from WWII with severe stress disorders. Rogers saw significant potential for healing in these groups (Rogers, 1970, 1977).

Rogers' lifelong commitment to testing democratic and progressive principles through the project method was forged at Union Theological Seminary and Columbia Teacher's College. In his definitive theoretical statement of the person-centred approach (Rogers, 1959), he noted that his theory of therapy was the most sound, while the theory as it applies to interpersonal relations and groups required more research. He wrote, "One direction which appears only theoretically possible is the exploitation in governmental affairs and international relations of some of the

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implications of this theory. I do not regard this as likely in the near future” (p. 250). By 1982, Rogers, along with Gay Swenson from the Center for the Studies of the Person, was planning a gathering of “state, federal and international statespersons ... to see how the pca [sic] could be useful in conflict resolution processes” (Kirschenbaum, 2009, p. 542). Kirschenbaum has provided an excellent detailed description of their efforts.

Rogers saw the source of global tension as longstanding “intercultural and international feuds” (Rogers & Ryback, 1984, p. 3), and religious and interracial hatred. Rogers reported, “In my own country, and in others as well ... the primary method of dealing with these tensions at the international level is through force or the threat of force” (p. 3). Rogers sought ways to reject this predominant toxic mind-set, researching what power humans have to create policies that facilitate a cultural shift instead. He asked, is there any hope, or are we inevitably, “On a collision course leading to our own destruction? ... It is vital to our very survival that we learn how to deal constructively with hatreds and competition between groups” (p. 3).

Rogers studied the Camp David Accord that US President Jimmy Carter negotiated with Egyptian President Anwar El Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin. He travelled to South Africa under apartheid, running interracial workshops in multiple cities, and worked tirelessly organizing meetings of high-level representatives from warring factions in Central America, on the cessation of the wars between countries in Central America, and with people on different sides of “the Troubles” in Ireland. His work in Ireland was filmed and the resulting documentary, *The Steel Shutter* (Skinner, 1973), attracted worldwide attention. This considerable body of his later work resulted in him being nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize (Barrett-Lennard, 1998; Kirschenbaum, 2009; Lago & MacMillan, 1999; Segrera & Araiza, 1993; Tudor & Worrall, 2006; Wolter-Gustafson, in press).

FORMATIVE EXPERIENCES AND HISTORY OF THE INITIATIVE

Deep-seated conflicts rely on attacks, dehumanization of the other, denial of responsibility, distortion of other’s positions, and maintenance of one’s own infallibility. In international person-centred groups, I have seen mature facilitators withstand that barrage and, with fierce patience and a passionate moral strength, initiate deep listening, accurate empathic understanding, and calls for accountability, thus creating the conditions that make conflict resolution possible. I see my work in Going Global as providing opportunities for more people to develop these skills and life-affirming ways of being.

Several of the authors of this article had the opportunity and privilege of seeing this phenomenon first-hand in large groups of 100 to 300 participants while participating in some of the earliest “cross-cultural” events with Rogers and colleagues. I, Colin Lago, and Peggy Natiello all participated in one such extraordinary event in Hungary in 1984 while that nation was still behind the “Iron Curtain”. The political tension and fear were palpable in the room of several hundred people. It was not clear who might have been an informant for the Communist government. Real human consequences were at stake. Despite the presence of distrust, and through a mature realization of Rogers’ facilitative conditions for change, this group became more able to exhibit the qualities of genuine empathic listening, co-creation of narratives, and constructive problem-solving. We describe this as an increased capacity to hold multiple perspectives. Over time, the processes Rogers had identified as cultivating change and growth were also palpable.

Throughout the conflict which occurred during this group, the facilitators maintained their strong desire to hear accurately and empathically what each person was expressing. To the degree they were able, they listened and responded to each person with an unconditional attitude free of judgement. No one hid behind an inauthentic “professional” façade. Each facilitator’s style was unique. There was no official “Rogerian” way to be. Rogers encouraged differences among facilitators, rejecting that kind of dogmatism that leads to reification of a theory and practice.

This quality of acceptance of our fundamental differences and empathic understanding of others contributes to a radical shift of consciousness. This is no small task, since judgement and intolerance are observable in all social groups, from social media to political discourse. Jerold Bozarth has examined Rogers’ theory of growth and change, linking it to the concept of paradigm shifts and critical mass consciousness (Bozarth, 1998). Malcolm Gladwell described this phenomenon as a “tipping point” in which an idea, trend or social behaviour crosses a threshold, “tips”, and spreads like wildfire (Gladwell, 2000).

Towards that end, the first Going Global Workshop in 2011 was held in Vermont, in the US. It was created from Peggy Natiello’s passion and joined by my own. Colin Lago was invited to join us, and this team grew together in connectedness and commitment. In our invitation letter, we wrote: “Participants in Going Global come together to reflect on our personal connections to global issues using the transformational format of the person-centred approach (PCA) pioneered by Carl Rogers”.

In 2013, Temenos, a pre-eminent person-centred training programme in the UK was celebrating its 20th anniversary, and Keemar Keemar and John Wilson invited us to celebrate with them by participating in a conference day as well as two large group workshops, Going Global Sheffield, and Going Global Glasgow. In November 2015, we held Going Global Sedona in Arizona. The participants of that group encouraged us to organize a workshop in 2016. Each group has been unique in its relation to the theme, as we expect each new group to be.

REFLECTION — KEEMAR KEEMAR

Going Global is a meeting of people in a large group format, based on and following the work of American psychologist Carl R. Rogers. We came together as a team sharing a passion for allowing collective space for people to contemplate their relationship to local, political, economic, social, personal, and global issues, and for some to even extend their thinking to the biosphere and universe contexts. This is where I have started, in space and time.

The team all hold different perspectives and this has been one element of our coming together that I have appreciated; we do not all think or feel the same, we are a diverse team hoping to reflect, accommodate, and explore diversity in the participants of the groups we hold.

When I was at school, I was put into a class studying astronomy. From this time, I have been fascinated with the subject. Recently my interest has been fuelled by Professor Brian Cox and his TV series *Human Universe* (Cox, 2014). Our understanding of the universe and its size has dramatically increased in the last 30 years.

We [the human race] have come a long way! In only 500 years we have journeyed to the edge of our solar system and photographed our whole world. We have counted the galaxies; we have captured the most ancient light in the universe and measured its age. In doing so we have discovered that we are just one planet in orbit around one star amongst billions, inside one galaxy amongst trillions, afloat in a possibly infinite sea of space time. In finding our place in the universe we have come to realise how small and fragile a part of it we are. But,

it has been the most glorious ascent into insignificance because our physical demotion has been the inevitable consequence of a daring intellectual climb. From being the puppets of the Gods, to that most rare and precious thing ... a scientific civilization, the only one we know of anywhere in the universe, that has been able to comprehend its true place in nature. That is our greatest achievement. (Cox, 2014)

His phrase “the most glorious ascent into insignificance” really speaks to me and is the place where I can correlate space theory with psychology and people. Holding the tension between being part of the “only scientific civilisation anywhere in the universe” and being “gloriously insignificant” in universal space and time is a unique and modern dilemma. This dilemma requires me to hold a perspective that I am both irrelevant and merely a manifestation of elements and properties that are part of the universal system *and* that I am compelled to protect and promote both humanity and the planet on which we exist! We are after all, in the words of Professor Brian Cox, “a most rare and precious thing”.

Part of me can trust in the universal evolutionary process; how can I not given the billions of years that have gone before? Part of me wants to intervene in this evolutionary process, surely our scientific civilization has the wherewithal?

As I contemplate this dilemma I consider Rogers’ 19 propositions; his theory of personality and development, and specifically propositions five and six:

5. Behaviour is basically the goal-directed attempt of the organism to satisfy its needs as experienced, in the field as perceived.

6. Emotion accompanies and in general facilitates such goal directed behaviour, the kind of emotion being related to the seeking versus the consummatory aspects of the behaviour, and the intensity of the emotion being related to the perceived significance of the behaviour for the maintenance and enhancement of the organism. (Rogers, 1951, pp. 491–494)

In my opinion these are saying that human behaviour is motivated by emotions and or feelings, that emotions and or feelings are personal and experienced in the unique contexts and perception of each of us, and that these feelings are associated with movement towards a goal (seeking) and not with the completion of the goal (consummatory aspects).

Given that emotion or feeling is motivated by perception, perhaps it is this that may assist me in the resolution of the dilemma? How can I perceive the dilemma? Something is wrong, I must do something, someone is to blame, it is not my problem, it is not my fault, I must recycle more, I can send money to a cause, my government is responsible, my country is to blame, that other country is irresponsible, those people are not welcome here, wealth is bad, wealth will cure us, I can help, I am helpless ... and so on.

This would be a familiar way to perceive the issues and problems of the world and of humanity. This is our dominant rhetoric, it is this that we hear and see from our news media in a constant stream. Making someone else responsible or to blame does after all relieve us from some uncomfortable emotions and or feelings. It leaves us to stand by and watch.

What if everything is *perfect*? If I were able to consider this perspective, hold humanity and the globe in my perception “as if” it were perfect, what might happen? How would this perception of perfection change how I feel about the dilemma and consequently change how I may approach it? If everything is *perfect* then no one is to blame, it is no one’s fault. No person or group, no government or organization is bad and wrong. All can be included and understood, debated with compassion, and accepted. Everybody can take part, or not. I would have a choice but would not need to “stand by” or ignore anything.

This shift in perception, this acceptance that I am trying to promote through the Going Global events is based in the paradoxical belief that Rogers expressed so well: “The curious paradox is that when I accept myself just as I am, then I can change” (Rogers, 1961, p. 17). I believe this paradox can apply to individuals and large organizations, to countries and governments. If we can extend this to humanity, to the globe we live on and the universe we live in, we can manifest change that both protects and enhances our planetary environment and our species.

People talk often these days about “the environment” and our need to “do something to protect it”. I am proposing a change in our perception. This will be a change in one environment, our psychological environment – if our perception changes then our responses to the world we live in change, our behaviour changes; we can manifest the “seeking” and not worry about the “goal”. If we feel differently in the “seeking” then the “goal” can develop as we proceed.

For me, the Going Global events, are a space and time to consider and contemplate *perfect!*

REFLECTION — COLIN LAGO

We now face the haunting prospect of approaching global empathy in a highly energy-intensive interconnected world, riding on the back of an escalating entropy bill that now threatens catastrophic climate change and our very existence. Resolving the empathy/entropy paradox will likely be the critical test of our species’ ability to survive and flourish on Earth in the future. This will necessitate a fundamental rethinking of our philosophical, economic and social models. (Rifkin, 2009, p. 2)

I have chosen to repeat a quotation that I first included in an article published last year in conjunction with a large group experience held in France (Lago, 2014). In this earlier article I sought to reflect on a deeply unsettling anxiety that had been growing within me for some years in relation to the current state of the world, particularly with reference to ecology and global warming. I also wrote the following which appeared in the French workshop brochure.

Now we live in a “global” village, our relationships with others and with nature are both absolutely vital to the survival of our species. I believe our collective challenge is to seek how we might be more empathic and understanding towards nature and all those within our world. (Lago, 2014)

This overall concern, then, of ecological consciousness, had been brewing internally for years. My own understanding of these concerns came from, I believe, becoming a fairly recent grandfather and these new relationships in my life having intensified my concerns, indeed anxieties, about the world itself and its future. I also noted that our global systematic misuse of nature and our exploitative mining of all useful materials have resulted in an earth suffering from global warming and serious depletion of natural resources. Consequently, our relationship with nature has, in recent history, been that of treating it as an object, something to be taken from or discarded or used. In both the cases above we have, in Martin Buber’s terms (1958), treated the other (the earth) as an object not a subject.

By inviting me to co-facilitate the first Going Global large group workshop back in Vermont in 2013, Carol and Peggy unleashed in me a sensed possibility of being a member of a gathering of persons concerned with addressing this important, though opaque, theme. Hailing from our theoretical origins steeped in the writings of Rogers and colleagues, our team’s inevitable model

for conducting such a group process was consistent with our previous backgrounds and experiences within the person-centred approach (for example, see Lago & MacMillan, 1999; Natiello, 2001; Wood, 2008).

I cannot help but note what might already appear to be a philosophic contradiction in my brief notes above. That is, it would be easy to accuse me of explicitly entering into such a process with a pre-defined intention, an agenda to ensure the discussion of ecological issues, and, as such, to therefore not being consistent with the general intention of facilitator non-directiveness, a concept deeply enshrined within the person-centred approach. My own brief response to this conundrum is that the workshop was advertised under the rubric of “Going Global”, a term which, though opaque or vague, nevertheless connotes something of the theme and thus participants who came were, to some level, “buying in” to discussions on this theme. Moreover, although we chose to implement our mode of working in the service of the group process, (i.e., the person-centred approach) we did not bind ourselves to a perspective that denied our own personally held congruent perspectives. We were still deeply committed to the exploration of issues raised and processed by group members themselves.

As Sanford wrote: “Dissension in the planning group is mirrored in the workshop” (Sanford, 1999, p. 19). This was a concept we were profoundly aware of, each of us having come across it in other circumstances. We spent many hours on Skype calls in the 18 months leading up to the workshop, sometimes as long as three hours at a time; discussing, reflecting, sharing, disagreeing, and so on in order to ensure that our relationships were solidly grounded, believing that this quality of connectedness would transmit to the overall group process.

The last group in Sedona truly benefitted from its location in the desert, some 10 miles from any sealed road. The surrounding environment, the quality of the accommodation, and the wholesome food (no drugs or alcohol permitted) provided a context in which the group could work together, temporarily freed of their everyday realities. Interestingly John K. Wood (2008) noted this impact of the environment upon groups and, in the same text, also discussed the challenges for any person-centred group process if a participating person was determined to undermine or sabotage the process. Fortunately, in this recent experience in Sedona, the whole group worked profoundly together, scheduling three sessions of group work every day and proving most sensitive to the very wide variety of concerns that emerged. No one individual dominated or overly determined what was discussed. The discussions ranged in content from the deepest personal experiences to local, national, and international concerns of a sociological, legal, and political nature.

A further reflection here is again related to a comment that John Wood (2008) made; he suggested that perhaps what good groups required was not necessarily “good” facilitators (although of course we believe that might help) but rather “good” participants. Whilst not wishing to be drawn into any pedantic discussion about exactly what “good” might mean in this context, it is apparent from this experience in Sedona that we all, the whole group, enjoyed a deeply rewarding, reflective, and transforming time together, as evidenced by the sheer volume of communications amongst the group since.

In summing up this brief section, I continue to believe that one of the most valuable things we can do as human beings is to share our concerns and anxieties, to face them squarely. It seems to me that the medium of, and opportunity for, groups coming together (and we have a long history of them within the person-centred approach) will afford us the context in which our fears, anxieties, and problems about overwhelming concerns might be faced. It is in these “sacred spaces” (Brazier, 2014), in these discussion circles, that we create a potential much larger than

any of us; a potential to enhance our sensitivity to our worldly context, our relationships, and to complexity itself.

As Margaret Mead said, “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has” (as cited in Keys, 2014, p. 54).

REFLECTION — PEGGY NATIELLO

For many years my life focus has been social change. Back in the 1960s, as the mother of five children, I became obsessed with the threat of nuclear war. How could we, as a culture, have invented warheads that had the capacity to blast all of humanity off the face of the earth, I wondered? And now, in 2015, the threats to human life have proliferated.

Scientists tell us that our planet, violated to satisfy our greed, may not be able to sustain life much longer. But that is only one of their prophecies. We are engaged in drastic social, environmental, economic, and political shifts globally that threaten our existence. As Colin (Lago) put it: “our collective challenge is to seek how we might be more empathic and understanding towards nature and those within our world” (Lago, 2014, p. 5). He is talking about a shift in consciousness; a shift that will enable us to grasp what quantum thinkers refer to as the “oneness” of all being. If such a shift is to take place, we need a different kind of wisdom.

“Wisdom”, said Eckhart Tolle, “is not a product of thought. The deep knowing that is wisdom arises through the act of giving someone/something your full attention. Attention is primordial intelligence, consciousness itself” (Tolle, 2003, p. 19).

Practitioners of the person-centred approach fully understand the value of attention and how powerfully it affects consciousness. We bring rapt attention, deep listening, no agenda into our work. We honour the organismic process and await the emergence of wisdom, relying on the interchange of energy, the ability to focus, and a carefully constructed climate rather than on predictability, diagnosis or problem-solving. As Senge and colleagues suggested, the person-centred way relies on using *hearts and intuition* to feel and dwell in our experiences, including those in nature, trying to sense the meanings. “You observe and observe and let this experience well up into something appropriate. In a sense there is no decision-making. What to do becomes obvious” (Senge, Scharmer, Jaworski, & Flowers, 2004, p. 86).

Thus, rather than pretending we could solve the array of problems facing us, the Going Global staff chose to look at the global threats through the lens of person-centredness. We have a history:

I have long had a keen interest in the future. This is a world of change, and I take pleasure in trying to discern the directions in which we are moving ... we are going through a transformational crisis, from which we and our world cannot emerge unchanged. (Rogers, 1980, p. 339)

Our staff wondered what we could learn about moving into an unpredictable, chaotic future by observing a group process that developed around that issue. The outcome was astounding. We made mountains of resources – DVDs, papers, books, films – available during the five-day period

of the Going Global group in Sedona in 2015. Almost nothing was touched or sought out by participants. The hunger in this group was for emotional connection, for being seen, for being known, for being together as much as possible, for being inseparable ... for being one. The group never took a break from one another. We met every morning until lunch, every afternoon until dinner, every night until we were ready to drop! Our staff avoided any directiveness or leading. There was no schedule, no plan, no agenda for the next gathering. From my perspective the group answered our question: what do we need to move into a more creative future? The answers were “each other” and a realized experience of *oneness*.

Rogers (1980) wrote about “the person of tomorrow”:

Persons of tomorrow would be at home in a world that consists only of vibrating energy, a world with no solid base, a world of process and change, a world in which the mind is both aware of and able to create a new reality. They will be able to make the paradigm shift. (p. 352)

I believe the 2015 Going Global community dwelt creatively in that world for five days, most without flinching. I am convinced that every relationship, every behaviour, every value will inevitably change when our consciousness can embrace the oneness of all reality. We could not pollute the earth with garbage. The earth is part of us. We could not build warheads to annihilate “the other”. The other is us. We could not bear oppression. The oppressed are us. We could not sustain the divide between rich and poor. The poor are us. If our consciousness shifts into a deep awareness of oneness, we will no longer have to count recycled plastic bottles or negotiate wars; we will behave entirely differently from our past, we will love and protect one another and our natural world with the exquisite respect we deserve.

That is the paradigm shift that is struggling to be completed

REFLECTION — JOHN WILSON

My conviction is that technology will develop so quickly that the ecological danger to the planet will dissipate and leave us with the central question, how do we live together? (Diamandis, 2012). The developments in technology over the next 20 years are likely to continue to be exponential and outstrip our capacity to envisage them. These developments include technology that will transform the way that we harness and consume energy, reducing our carbon footprint and the impact of global warming. Changing how we harness and consume energy will impact how we organize and provide for ourselves, including healthcare, governance, finance, and transportation (Diamandis, 2012; Rifkin, 2009).

This will be a time of great surprise as global issues evaporate and leave us with the central question, how do we live together in empathy with all of life on this planet?

The drama around scarcity of resources and how we think about solutions has long kept humans in a paradigm of top-down power where only those considered to be the most intelligent and those with the most resources can make any kind of a difference. This paradigm of scarcity and power belonging to the few distracts us from using our full potential to address global crises. The internet has demonstrated the power of distributed networks, people all over the planet who can collaborate and create without seeking permission from the prevailing paradigm. However, the internet is a mirror of the human capacity and desire for deep connection that goes beyond our

current technological abilities. Sitting in an audience that is being moved by a powerful speaker or irritated by a thoughtless orator is a very clear experience of group mind (Natiello, 2005). Larger expressions of this almost telepathic ability resident in humans can be seen as whole nations mobilize behind a cause. The attacks in Paris in November 2015 created a global empathic response that was facilitated by social media and extended far beyond our addiction to mobile technology and deep into the souls of billions of people.

My tablet or smartphone is almost useless without a connection to the internet. But when I get my device online, it is not only a little better, it is exponentially better. And as the network develops my individual device becomes many, many times more useful. However, when we think about the human, so often in our cultures, we value a person's capacity to "stand on their own two feet", we guide children towards independence, a condition that was useful for the industrial revolution where corporations and governments needed humans to act as sentient machines.

Political, religious and corporate networks have been able to achieve goals far beyond the capacity of the individuals working on their own, and yet these networks are still not reaching their full capacity as they are so often defined in opposition to their competitors and separated out from each other.

In this paradigm people are like a device that is connected to a very small and contained network, we can make a contribution in that state, but we are only using a small fraction of our capacity. The larger the network, the more useful the device becomes. Likewise, the larger and more integrated the human network is, the more impactful it becomes. Technology has created the capacity to merge all of the individual human networks into one global group mind, each network that joins together creates an exponential growth in capacity, creating a global group mind, a global neural network that could address any and all issues facing the planet.

There are two major roadblocks to this global group mind. Firstly, our fear of scarcity, which is about to be eliminated by technology; it still seems incredible to us now, but the exponential growth in technology as envisaged by futurologist Jeremy Rifkin in his TED talk (2010) will allow all of our homes and cars to be powered by solar energy. Production of the vast majority of things we need and want will move from giant factories to the 3D printer that will sit in our kitchen. The 3D printer's capacity to replicate itself, using freely available material, will make everything accessible to everyone. The scarcity model will no longer exist, as anyone anywhere will be able to produce anything at zero cost.

The second and most profound roadblock is our fear of each other. The single greatest tool of everyone who has ever wielded top-down power is to keep humans scared and separate from each other, that is, to cap the power of the human network so that it does not outgrow the capacity of the people who want to control it. This second obstacle is what has been addressed in the Going Global groups: to reduce our fear of each other so that we can be available to plug into a global neural network of life on this planet.

Anyone who has ever tried to connect a wireless printer to his or her computer knows how hard it can be to achieve a networked state. This is also true of us as humans, the idea of being connected is a simple one, but the overcoming of fear to create group mind is a fraught, but entirely possible, endeavour.

This is what the Going Global groups have taught me. The groups were convened with the theme Going Global and the intention to think about how we might contribute to human development. And yet the groups, for the most part, have not addressed this theme directly, most of the time was spent doing deep personal work. The group members paid attention to each other

in ways that allowed the individuals to explore their own vulnerabilities, to overcome the deep-seated fear resident in so many of us, and to connect deeply with each other. To the onlooker it might seem that the groups had abandoned the theme of considering global issues, and yet quite the opposite was happening; the groups were engaging in the intricate and delicate work of creating a group mind that could exponentially increase our capacity to contribute to human development.

The Going Global groups and the many other groups like them around the world are engaging with the challenge facing all human beings, to help each other overcome the fear that separates us. It is important not to be distracted by the issues that are a clear and present danger; we need to be available to each other so that we can create a truly global community and let futures emerge that are beyond our wildest dreams.

CONCLUSION

The prime characteristic of the Going Global workshops is that participants and facilitators co-create the community. Each person brings their own unique history and resources to the group. One voice does not represent the group. Likewise, the format of this article acknowledges the unique perspective of our facilitation team. Each of us has contributed a section of this piece independently, but together we hope it will give you a glimpse of our collective work.

Each of us is committed to deepening our attitudes, skills, and ways of being in the world that build and enhance personal and community power. We hope this article with five voices has given you a glimpse into our intentions, processes, and reflections on our Going Global initiative based in the person-centred approach. The following quote expresses Rogers' conviction, and our own.

If the time comes ... when our culture tires of endless homicidal feuds, despairs of the use of force and war as a means of bringing peace, becomes discontent with the half lives that it's members are living, only then will our culture seriously look for alternatives... When that time comes they will not find a void... They will find that there are ways of being that do not involve power over persons and groups. They will discover that harmonious community can be built on the basis of mutual respect and enhanced personal growth. (Rogers, 1980, p. 205)

We invite dialogue with all interested parties.

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Carol Wolter-Gustafson received her doctorate in education from the Department of Humanistic and Behavioral Studies at Boston University. She met Carl Rogers as a graduate student during a nine-day residential workshop in New York, and later she worked on staff with him. Carol values the unique opportunities for learning that we create together in the week long large-group format. Her personal and professional life centres on cultivating a pathway out of the “us-versus-them” thinking and rhetoric that fuels violence locally and globally. Her writing, workshops, and courses (in the US, Mexico, Europe, and Japan) are concerned with exploring those themes and how to move through the illusion of the body-mind split to help create more fully-functioning persons. Carol maintains a client-centred practice in Boston.



Colin Lago was Director of the Counselling Service at the University of Sheffield, UK, from 1987 to 2003. He now works as an independent counsellor/psychotherapist, trainer, supervisor, and consultant. Trained initially as an engineer, Colin went on to become a full-time youth worker in London and a teacher in Jamaica before becoming a counselling practitioner. He is a Fellow of the British Association for Counselling & Psychotherapy. Deeply committed to transcultural concerns within psychotherapy, he has published articles, videos, and books on the subject. To balance professional demands he loves to run, bike and dance!



Peggy Natiello has worked with the theory and values of the person-centred approach since 1978 as professor, therapist, consultant, parent, and friend. Her relationship with Carl R. Rogers ran the gamut from primary supervisor of her doctoral work, to co-facilitator of groups, to cherished friend, to theoretical sparring partner. Peggy searches to integrate the values of the person-centred approach ever more deeply as equivalent to a spiritual practice. Her book, *The Person-Centered Approach: A Passionate Presence* (2001, PCCS Books), was written to clarify the importance of this often misunderstood and radical approach to psychotherapy, education, group work, and life. At present, her focus is in the field of consciousness.



Keemar Keemar, Director of Temenos Education Ltd, Sheffield, UK a person-centred training organisation for counsellors and psychotherapists. He has been in practice since 1993 and currently also works at the University of Lincoln, UK, has an independent practice and is a certified equine psychotherapist.



John Wilson has been in private practice as a counsellor since 2005 in West Lothian and online using video conferencing and virtual environments. As co-founder of onlinevents, John has brought together his love of technology and passion for person-centred learning environments and has co-created an online learning space where practitioners from all over the world can come together to think and reflect together. John is also responsible for running the business of Temenos and is co-facilitator on its person-centred psychotherapy and counselling programme, one of the most radical person-centred programmes surviving in the UK. This programme does

not have a curriculum, the learning arises out of the process of the group in relationship to the professional standards in the field of counselling and psychotherapy. Temenos provides an environment where trainees can engage in a rigorous training in which personal and professional development is inevitable. John has a passion for large group work and has been part of the organizing and facilitation teams for a number of large person-centred groups in the UK.