Interview with Steven Tebbe (Global Footprint Network)

Divya Manocha

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Divya Manocha: Can you please introduce yourself, describe the problem that you are addressing, and how you are responding to it?

Steven Tebbe: I'm Steven Tebbe. I'm the CEO of the Global Footprint Network, which is an NGO looking at the world from a holistic environmental, or ecosystems, approach. I mention that specifically because we have been very focused on climate change for the past two decades or so, while I think we are overlooking the other elements of our ecosystem that are all interconnected in the environment, as well as connected to other issues of our societies, such as social issues or governance issues, and to go even further, safety and security issues.

My background is in the private sector originally. I've been running a couple of NGOs over the past 15 years. For over 10 years, I ran the Carbon Disclosure Project, which is the world's largest investor-backed initiative on climate change, water and forest-related disclosure, and corporate disclosure. I've worked with the EU for over two years to establish a draft of the EU corporate reporting requirements called the CSRD [Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive], and I joined the Global Footprint Network just over a year ago.

Divya Manocha: I'm curious to know more about the specific issues that your organization is working on, and how you're approaching these issues.

Steven Tebbe: Over 30 years ago, we developed a quite complex method of assessing the biocapacity of the planet. This was developed in academia, and it has been peer-reviewed ever since. It's important to note that because there are a lot of models and a lot of approaches out there. It's essential that every model, every approach, and every scientific method is thoroughly peer-reviewed and stress-tested, and that it evolves, or is even dismissed if it's proven to be incorrect. In that sense, we are very well-established.

We established the NGO 20 years ago, so 10 years after the method was developed. As I explained before, the method is a way of accounting for all the biocapacity that we have and comparing that to how we use biocapacity each year. That results in us being able to establish quite precisely how we are being sustainable -- or not sustainable -- not just on climate change, but on our ecosystem as a whole.

We use a very simple definition of sustainability that consists of two simple formulas. One is that if you use more resources than the Earth can regenerate in one year, you are unsustainable. So in order to be sustainable, you have to use equal or less than the planet can regenerate. The second formula is that if you create more waste than the Earth can assimilate in a year, you are accumulating waste. So there, the formula is that you have to generate equal or less waste than can be assimilated in one year. If you keep those two formulas in balance, or have a positive balance, then you're sustainable.

Unfortunately, we've noticed through our data and our research that since the early 1970s, overall as a planet, we are unsustainable. We've come to terms that we're using Earth's Overshoot, which means we're using and consuming more resources than we currently have, and we're creating more waste than can be assimilated.

We measure that on a global scale, for the whole planet, but we also do it on a country-by-country level, a regional, and even a city level. We have engaged in doing it on a company level to assess how companies are doing on this. A number of years ago, we developed an individual Footprint Calculator, where individuals could type in their habits, describe the way they live and the way they consume, and receive an estimation of, "If everybody lived like you, how many planets would we need or how many resources would we need as a planet of nearly 8 billion people?" As you might imagine, there are big variations between the consumption habits of different people, and also big differences between countries. There are still some countries that are sustainable in terms of how they're using ecology, but more and more countries are unsustainable and therefore an overshoot.

Divya Manocha: You've mentioned that your Footprint Calculator works at a city level, a company level, and also at an individual level. I wonder if you could quickly summarize who the beneficiaries are, or more specifically who your clients are, and how they benefit directly from your work?

Steven Tebbe: As an NGO, we see all of civilization, all of humanity, and everything living on planet Earth, as our client. Our work is about managing our resources in a consistent, coherent way for the long term. We engage in different levels. The Footprint Calculator that I mentioned before is being widely used either directly through our website or through our many partners, like Greenpeace and WWF [World Wildlife Federation]. They're running our system in the background.

We have over 5 million users every year through our Footprint Calculator, so we've had many millions of users. That is usually a starting point for many people in becoming aware of sustainability, and what is unsustainable.

I believe that it's very difficult for the individual to change course, first of all, because as one individual out of 8 billion, it's hard to change everything by yourself. On the other hand, we also live in an economy where, in some areas, we don't have choices. Our consumption is sometimes unsustainable without us having a choice to become more sustainable.

I'll give you an example of electricity usage. If you live in certain countries, your electricity grid might be more sustainable and made up of more renewable energy. In other countries, the energy grid might be primarily ensured through coal or lignite power, which makes it much more polluting. In others, it might be mainly nuclear-powered. That might be less polluting in terms of greenhouse gas emissions, but it might have other issues. As individuals, we do have many choices, but we're limited in our choices in some areas.

The supply of our food systems is another challenge. We have a lot of labels nowadays about organic food, sustainable sourcing, fair trade, and such things, but it's very hard for an individual to assess the footprint of those food systems or to make smarter choices. We can, and we should, as individuals have a big impact in terms of our purchasing habits, our consumption habits, our lifestyle, the way that we vote politically, and the way that we impact our environment. There is a very good African proverb that says, "If you think you're too small to have an impact, try spending a night in a room with a mosquito." A mosquito can do a lot of damage, or keep you awake all night. Every individual can have a lot of impact.

We believe that, fundamentally, systems have to change, and we need to integrate systems. By systems, I mean the policy together with the private sector. In the private sector, you can even distinguish between corporate companies producing all the goods and services that we consume. Then there are the investment flows, the investors, and the capital flows. How are these companies supported financially?

You also need to engage with civil society because you need to inform and educate, and to keep civil society on track and on board with these necessary changes. There's a lot of evidence, a lot of examples, to support why we should switch from combustion engine cars to electric vehicles or public transport to save energy. Of course, there's sometimes resistance in civil society. That can also jeopardize a policymaker into maybe not being reelected if it's an unpopular choice. Therefore, it's essential to educate and inform everyone about what's going on and why we need to do this.

That's where we can be very helpful, like I said, with the Footprint Calculator. I see our main engagement more on a policy level, with governments, municipalities, and international organizations. We have had a number of partnerships with countries that have chosen to use the ecological footprint as an indicator for their national policies and to get on track with net-zero targets or more sustainable practices in their economies and keep track of them.

Divya Manocha: I'm also curious to know about how you measure success. What kind of metrics do you use to measure across different levels, like individual, city-wide, and government-wide?

Steven Tebbe: There are metrics that you can measure easily, and there are metrics that are harder to measure. One metric is having the right science and the right facts. Our 30-year track record of a peer-reviewed, academically-developed method that is extremely robust is essential. We use only UN-approved data in our calculations to avoid any discussion about the quality of the data or the interpretation of the data. Per country, we have between 10 and 15,000 data points going into the model, so it's a lot of data. We now have a time track dating back to 1960, so we have a time record of data spanning over 60 years, from 1960 to 2023. I think having historical data is really important.

Another very important metric is how well we make a very complex issue understandable to all. We do that through the Overshoot concept. It's quite easy to understand. Last year, for example, Earth's Overshoot was on August 2nd. What that means is that on August 2nd, we as humanity have used up all of our ecological capacity, our biocapacity, for that year.

Everybody can understand that because it's comparable to your current bank account. If you get your salary at the beginning of the month, and you spend all your money by the halfway point of that month, then you don't have any money left, and you go into deficit. That's essentially what we're doing with the ecology. We're going into a deficit. As with a bank, you can do that for a while, but eventually, the bank will reclaim your debts. That is what planet Earth is doing now. We're seeing the effects of that deficit. I don't need to enumerate all the droughts, extreme weather events, and biodiversity loss.

Luckily, there are still some regions in the world that are more sustainable than others, but more and more countries are becoming unsustainable or have been unsustainable for a long time. If you look at some of the worst countries in terms of Overshoot, countries like Qatar or Luxembourg, Earth's overshoot falls into early February. They run out of ecological credit in February for the rest of the year.

I think it's a good metric to make a complex system easy to understand. One interesting metric I can share is that this past year, we had over 8 billion media hits on our Earth's Overshoot Day, so

8 billion hits on August 2nd alone. Many people—from the General Secretary of the United Nations, Guterres, to the Pope to CEOs, to policymakers around the world, to NGO leaders—are referencing Earth's Overshoot Day and the work that we do. In terms of education and advocacy, that's a very important metric for us.

Ultimately, success will lie in creating change. Right now, we're raising consciousness. Getting institutions, countries, policymakers, and the private sector to measure progress and change habits is the goal. One way of doing that is for countries to consider using the ecological footprint as a parallel indicator to the GDP. So you would have a GDP that reflects your financial success as a country, and then you would have an ecological footprint parallel to measure your ecological success, or lack thereof, which can help you get back on track. More and more countries are starting to consider this.

It's also, as a rule of thumb, the GDP-rich countries that tend to have the worst ecological footprint and a big deficit, whereas GDP-poorer countries tend to have some of the better ecological footprints. We specifically say GDP rich and GDP poor instead of developed world and developing or less developed world, which is what we usually say, because in many ways, what we consider "less developed" is more advanced and more in tune with the environment. It's a way of recalibrating the world onto what is really important. Is the economy the most important, or do we need an ecological basis that we all rely on?

Divya Manocha: What are you doing to make sure that there are more parties, more governments, and more organizations around the world using your footprint as an indicator? What steps are you taking to make this happen?

Steven Tebbe: We communicate quite successfully through various channels. We have been referenced many times by different institutions and leaders around the world. I think it's very important to create that awareness. We are also engaging with countries directly because we do a country-by-country ecological footprint calculation. We do that in partnership to be academically honest and to avoid a conflict of interest.

We started a partnership with York University in Canada a number of years ago, and they are doing all the calculations on our behalf. We have outsourced that on purpose because we're an NGO and we're an advocacy group, so we want to be very clear that the calculations are done by academic institutions, not by us. That way, no one could accuse us of embellishing the statistics one way or the other. That calculation is done for 200 countries in the world, in addition to some regions. We then try to engage countries to use the ecological footprint as an indicator for their national strategy to improve sustainability.

A couple of years ago, we developed a second indicator called the Country Deficit Day, which is a slightly different way of looking at it. To clarify, Country Overshoot Day looks at how we would do in terms of sustainability if the entire world lived like a certain country. If you take some extreme examples, like Luxembourg, which has an Overshoot Day sometime in February, this indicator tells us that if the whole world lived like Luxembourg, we would have an Earth Overshoot Day not on August 2nd, but in February. That's bad. However, if the whole world lived like Jamaica, our Earth's Overshoot Day, as a planet, would be on or around December 24th. We can see that Jamaica is much more sustainable than Luxembourg in terms of ecology. There are also countries that have credit, that have a reserve, and that can go beyond.

Obviously, like with a bank account, you want to make your money -- or in this case your ecology -- lasts beyond the end of the month or the end of the year. Ideally, you want to have some savings leftover and put aside. So at the moment, we are consuming way more than we should.

The Country Deficit Day is a different way of looking at this problem, where we say, "Imagine your country does not have any imports anymore. Imagine it sealed off its borders and lived on its own, depending solely on its own resources. How long would it last?" There we see again that many GDP-rich countries are dependent on imports of goods, of services, of raw materials, and of food. At the same time, export is waste, and it puts waste somewhere else. This indicator looks at how long a country would last if they were not able to do this any longer.

It's particularly interesting in terms of safety and security. During the days of COVID-19, or the Ukraine War, or other conflicts around the world, trade stops. We've seen how tough life can become when trade stops all of a sudden. We are extracting resources from countries that still have a lot of resources, and maybe we're exploiting those countries as well for the benefit of some other countries. Now, if that stops, or if we did a fair analysis of that, how long would those exploiting countries last? That's a more geopolitical way of looking at it, that goes beyond the purely ecological. As a country leader, it's particularly important that when you consider, "How am I running my country?" you also consider "How sovereign can I be with the ecology?"

Divya Manocha: I would like to zoom out a bit and think about the audience, which includes journalists, philanthropists, and activists. Do you have any insights or teachable lessons that these groups could learn from?

Steven Tebbe: There's such a wealth of information in the data and in the analysis that we do and that we provide. As a science-backed organization, although the evidence is there, we want to be an objective and neutral observer regarding what kind of action we need to take. I think for journalists and activists, one interesting lesson to draw from this is the need for negotiation

between GDP-rich countries and GDP-poor countries, or ecologically-rich countries and ecologically-poor countries.

That applies to the whole UN system if we're talking about COP [Conference of the Parties], and not just COP climate change, but also COP biodiversity. There are different COPs. Some countries would have much more leverage if they had this data, and if they used this data more strategically, as again, we are benefiting from the resources of countries that are among the poorest in the world in terms of GDP. There needs to be an honest debate, and maybe even a transfer. There certainly needs to be more support for GDP-poorer countries from GDP-rich countries. I think that is one very interesting angle.

The whole sustainability debate is often led solely by the environmental crowd, be it the environmental ministry, the ministries of the environment, the environmental NGOs, or environmentally-focused academia, but this is a much broader issue. It's an issue about human survival. Therefore, it is of interest to anybody and everybody because it affects safety, security, and survival. It's a social issue, and it's a threat multiplier. If we run out of food, if our ecological systems collapse, there are going to be more and more conflicts. There's a lot of evidence for that. Take the mass migrations in Syria, Mali, and many other places. If you don't have an ecosystem in which you can survive and thrive, you're going to immigrate somewhere that might have greener pastures. That is normal. That's what everybody would do, and that creates friction. It creates conflict and pressure.

The issue, then, is a social issue, an issue of humanitarian development, of avoiding conflicts and wars. Therefore, it needs to be a much broader debate. Interestingly, one of the first countries to take this theme of sustainability as a strategic issue is the US. The US military and the defense ministries have understood, from a slightly different angle maybe, that sustainability is a threat multiplier.

Divya Manocha: Can you describe something you tried that didn't pan out the way you wanted it to, and that taught you an important lesson others can learn from?

Steven Tebbe: To be very honest, I don't think anything we have done, or anything any other NGOs and organizations have done, has worked because we're not making the necessary progress. Until we make the progress that is needed, and come to a place where we're sustainable, nothing has worked. In fact, it's getting worse as we speak.

We have been, to a large extent, aware of this issue for many years, many decades even. If I think back, WWF, Greenpeace, and the Club of Rome started warning us about many of these issues over 50 years ago. Some people are in denial, and maybe will always be so, but the fact is we have

not been able to collectively make progress and put humanity on a path of sustainability. At the moment, we are collectively failing.

The question, therefore, is: How can we do better? There are many issues, of course, and many challenges. As human beings, we tend to think about ourselves and the immediate future first. There's always a personal emergency or something that's more urgent than dealing with this abstract, longer-term ecological systems problem that we feel we can't control anyway. So we deal with those immediate, urgent issues at hand, be it hunger, conflict with a neighbor, or job loss, things like that.

Politicians react to that tendency. They feel they need to act for their constituents. The lifespan of many politicians is becoming shorter and shorter the same way the tenure of a big-company CEO, who could establish more sustainable strategies [if given the time to make change], is becoming shorter and shorter. Shareholders, especially those affiliated with publicly listed companies, are pressured to create quarterly results and quarterly profits. They often don't have what we call the patient capital to invest longer term because it likely would mean a dip in profits for a while. Of course, in the longer term, you become a better company, but there's a contradiction in terms of dealing with the macro, long-term big picture versus dealing with the micro, short-term picture.

The solution has to be more of a systems-thinking solution. It needs to be integrated with other sectors instead of the environmental movement dealing with this issue in isolation. We also need to learn: Where are the low-hanging fruit? Where can we have the biggest impacts? You see all these initiatives, which are all great, but they're not making enough impact. Here in Europe, there was an initiative that banned plastic straws. While that initiative is great, it won't save the Earth, or significantly change anything in the bigger scheme.

People sometimes feel burdened by this, or become cynical and ask, "How is me not using a plastic straw going to change anything?" We know we need to fundamentally change our energy systems. We need to change our food systems and our food supply systems as much as we need to change a lot of our culture, particularly our economic culture of unlimited growth. Does the economy permanently need to grow to be successful? Or is there a way for the economy to stop growing, but be successful nevertheless, by being stable?

We all know that with financial prosperity comes more consumption, and more consumption usually means more pollution and more waste. We have all these challenges to tackle, and we have to tackle them all at the same time, and we have to do it fast. However, my recommendation would be to not try to do everything at the same time and to stop treating everything equally. Dealing with the energy system is certainly more important than dealing with plastic straws, but sometimes the two are discussed as if they were of the same importance. Clearly, they're not.

When we talk about ESG [environmental, social, and governance] issues, there's this idea that we need to come to a point where the three circles, or focus areas, overlap, and that overlap is the sweet spot. The UN is creating that narrative, and it sounds very good, but I think it's a mistake. Yes, environmental, social, and governance issues are all important, but they're also very different.

Everything living on the planet needs the environment to survive. We can survive for a while if we're not social. But without the environment, there is no social; there is nothing to talk about. Rather than look at it as three concentric circles, I see ESG as more of a pyramid, where the base of the pyramid is the environment. That's the basis of everything. Then, you have the social as the aspiration. When we have a stable environment and ecosystem, we aspire to be more social, to avoid social injustice and all kinds of terrible social things.

On top of the pyramid, you have governance. Good governance is the highest aspiration, and it sits on the top of the pyramid because governance is what enables us to deal with all the other things. If we have corruption, if we don't have the right intentions, or if we have generally bad governance, we will never become social, and we will never be able to deal with the environment. In a sense, governance is the key to success, and the environment is what we need fundamentally to survive.

Divya Manocha: Can you tell me more about how you're working to advance system-level change in your field? What is most needed from other actors or partners to help advance that change?

Steven Tebbe: That's a big question. It's not just systems change, it's also systems thinking and integrating systems. Not all systems need to change. We have a lot of good systems measuring and tracking and so on, but they need to be integrated. Different ministries need to talk to each other. The Ministry of the Economy needs to talk with the Ministry of the Environment and needs to talk with the Ministry of Defense. They need to tackle these issues, which quite frankly are the biggest challenges humanity has ever faced. We need to face them together and find a solution together.

In this era of alternative facts, misinformation, and fears of AI taking over, there's a lot of wrong information and a lot of conspiracy theories going around. One fundamental thing that I think all organizations, NGOs, and policymakers need to do is to have absolute fact-checking. Be not just based on but backed by science and facts, so we are all online and can have an honest discussion about what's going on. Even with the best intentions and the best science and the best facts, there will be mistakes.

However, a lot of organizations and a lot of individuals are changing the facts or inventing facts, changing the science or inventing the science, which of course is misleading. That has to be

checked. Check your sources, check your facts, check your signs. It's essential to have a peer-reviewed, honest, open process.

We invite collaboration and working with many partners. That's why our name is Global Footprint Network. It's about networks, as well. That's an indication of systems thinking. We love to engage. We have done calculations for companies that allow us to showcase how the business model of a company working in recycling and reuse of materials, for example, is contributing to extending our overshoot and making good on ecological systems. If we had more companies like that, and if we could showcase more new business models to highlight how a business can change from consumption to reuse and more efficient upcycling, that could fundamentally transform our economy.

There are so many ways of thinking about it. We don't pretend to have better business models for every business. That business will have to be inventive and creative about themselves. What we can help with is creating a framework to say, "Okay, we need to operate in these boundaries, in these balances and equations, to create less waste and less consumption of resources." Then, the private sector can be creative and come up with an answer to the question: How can we do things differently?

For example, what we're doing right now, a video conference, wouldn't have been possible 20 years ago. Theoretically, if we had wanted to have a face-to-face conversation like this, one of us would have had to travel. Likely by airplane, which is highly polluting, and which also takes a lot of time and resources. Skype didn't invent the video conference, but they started scaling it. Now, video conferencing is so widely used that a lot of business-related travel can be avoided. We're traveling in a different way. We're being teleported, in a sense, through video conferencing.

Every sector should look at what they need to propose, and then they should rethink it. If you're in the automotive sector, is your business model selling more cars with combustion engines, which make a lot of noise and pollution and are parked on the street 90% of the time, rusting? Does everybody have an individual car, so one family might have three, or even four, cars?

Or is your business model transportation mobility? Then, you can think about this completely differently. If it's just getting Divya from one place to the other, this can be done through public transport in a very comfortable way. It doesn't have to be a terrible experience, crowded with everybody coughing on each other. It can be designed differently. It can be seamless, where you don't have to buy a ticket and then the machine doesn't work and you're missing your train for the third time.

All these concepts need to be rethought. You can say the same for energy, or for any sector. That's the kind of creativity we need to encourage, and that's what we're trying to do with our engagements.

Divya Manocha: Are there any challenges you're currently facing that you haven't been able to solve?

Steven Tebbe: One challenge that many NGOs face is funding. There are a lot of initiatives out there, and they're all competing for attention, so it's a big shouting match. Therefore, funders need to assess, "What is credible? What has a track record? What is contributing to solutions?" That can be anything from foundations making donations to other foundations, or NGOs such as us, or policymakers, or governments.

Solving this challenge involves several strategies: First, demonstrating impact. Clearly articulating the outcomes of our work and its relevance to pressing global challenges. This involves not just quantitative metrics but compelling narratives that connect our efforts to broader societal and environmental benefits.

Second, building relationships. Cultivating long-term relationships with funders, based on transparency, trust, and mutual understanding of goals and values. This often means going beyond transactional interactions to engage funders as partners in our mission.

Third, innovating fundraising. Exploring diverse funding streams beyond traditional grants and donations, such as social enterprise models, impact investing, or partnerships with the private sector. This diversification can help stabilize funding and reduce dependency on competitive grant cycles.

Fourth, enhancing visibility. Utilizing strategic communications and storytelling to elevate our organization's profile. This not only helps in attracting funding but also in mobilizing public support and advocacy for our cause.

And fifth, leveraging networks. Engaging with coalitions, networks, and alliances can amplify our voice and extend our reach, making our initiatives more attractive to funders looking for collaborative and systemic impact.

Addressing the funding challenge requires a multifaceted approach that balances immediate needs with long-term sustainability and impact goals. It's about not only proving the value of our work but also innovating in how we communicate, collaborate, and generate resources to fuel our mission.

Divya Manocha: Have there been any challenges apart from funding?

Steven Tebbe: Yes. For example, the EU has launched a mandatory reporting requirement for all corporations above a certain size operating in Europe, so not just European companies, but also foreign companies operating in Europe. That will bring enormous transparency to the market and to civil society about what those companies are doing on ESG. Making this mandatory is a game changer.

But now there are regions outside of the EU that are either trying to catch up or invent their own rules, competing with the EU and saying, "We have to ensure competitiveness." When there are different initiatives that are slightly competitive, they sometimes sabotage each other.

Around that, of course, you have a whole ecosystem of consultants, methods, and models. They all pretend to have the solution for everything. So again, there's a lot of noise out there. I think that's a particular challenge for us. We are not the new kid on the block; quite the contrary. We've been around for 30 years as a method and 20 years as an organization. One of the challenges is that if you're not the new shiny thing, will institutions engage? I think they do. As I said, we have a lot of references, but there's also a lot of distraction.

Another challenge is the current term, or tenure, of policymakers and CEOs. That's becoming shorter and shorter and it is under a lot of pressure. In many countries, there's a tendency to go more to populism, to direct results. Just do whatever seems to be popular on that particular day. Therefore, you have a lack of longer-term strategic progress as a country or as a company. I think that the shortening of tenures and the acceleration of action is an issue. It can be an opportunity as well because as things like technology and solutions accelerate, we can advance faster in many areas. [But that's not always the case.]

We're roughly 8 billion people living on a finite planet, so what are our choices? It really comes down to three choices. One is that we have fewer people on the planet. If we had half the people we do now, or just 10% of the population, then maybe we would be sustainable and have enough resources for those who remain. But how can you do that? Some countries, like China, have had a one-child policy. It didn't really work, and it's very intrusive. We don't want that. It's not a very popular policy proposal. But that is one option in terms of becoming more sustainable.

The second option is we all consume less, especially those who are consuming too much. They would be the first ones to reduce their consumption. Now, that's also not very popular because that makes people feel restricted in their choices. It also makes the private sector, the companies, say, "Now I need to sell more. I'm under pressure to grow and grow and grow." So that's also not a very popular choice.

Then, the third choice, which everybody is hoping for, is to have all kinds of magical tech solutions. There are an enormous number of solutions out there that should be leveraged, but that are not being harnessed yet because everybody has different agendas, and everybody is pushing their own agenda. But that's what we're all promoting, the idea that we will find a technology-based solution. It requires creativity to figure out how we can do the same thing in a different way, using fewer resources. That is probably the least disruptive in terms of becoming more sustainable, so that is what we should be pushing for the hardest because the other two options are much more disruptive and uncomfortable.

Divya Manocha: Is there anything we haven't covered that you feel is important to add?

Steven Tebbe: Ultimately, we have to change the narrative when talking about sustainability and the environment. This is not about the environment. Let's face it. The planet will go on with or without us. It is no longer about saving the panda bear and the polar bear, as much as we all love them. This is about having a planet that is livable for all of humanity, and hopefully for all living beings. It is the biggest challenge humanity has ever faced. It's a perfect storm, and we have to think of it as such rather than thinking only about sustainability and the environment.

Divya Manocha has been a LEDE Fellow with the Solutions Journalism Network and is the founder of SoJourn, a bootcamp that brings together university students from around the world to produce solutions journalism. SoJourn has led to the publication of several stories which now feature on the Solutions Story Tracker alongside the work of Pulitzer Prize-winning journalists. Divya's current work focuses on making assistive technology more accessible and using the power of play to drive civic engagement.

* This interview has been edited and condensed.