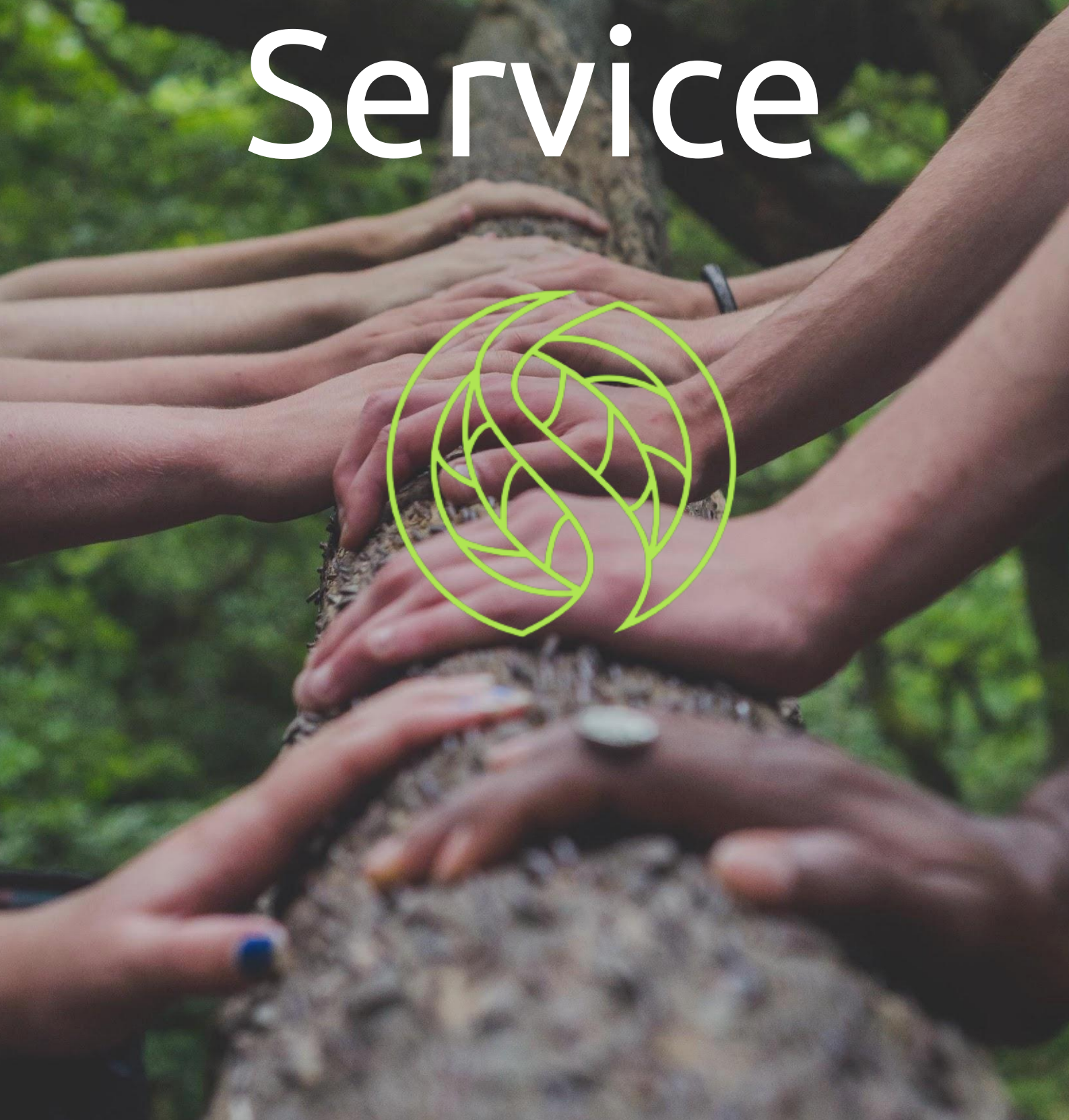


# Planetary Service



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# The Project Proposal

## Idea and project outline

Imagine, if every year, thousands, or even millions, of young people would spend a year in voluntary service of the Earth and their fellow Human Beings.

Our **vision** is:

- That every youngster from 18 years old upwards, from all around the world spends a whole year in service to the planet and its people. And by doing so, spreading all around an example of hope, peace and humanness, as well as cultivating a sustainable future together with more of these values.
- We also envision being a bridge to different initiatives that work towards a better and more sustainable future, uniting energies and networks through being part of one same movement, that being Planetary Service.



Therefore, our **mission** is:

- To join the ripple effect towards a sustainable future generating a movement of young people committed to a one-year volunteering experience serving the Earth and caring for those in need.
- Planetary Service acts as the support system for all those who join this movement, enriching and accompanying their experiences through holding regular check-in groups, offering workshops and talks throughout the year and giving a certification of completion recognizing the experience.
- The experience is self-designed and self-organised by the participants, going to projects and/or organisations related to Earth and People Care matters, in exchange for food and accommodation, and participating in an intercultural exchange.

This project proposal aims to acquaint the reader with the aims, mission and vision of Planetary Service while also acknowledging that a trial or prototype phase must be carried out to test the project. We are starting from absolute zero and we need to learn from our mistakes, adjust, readjust and polish the project in its trial period. As such, the project proposal is susceptible to changes in the coming years.

## Objectives

1. Reach as many young people from the age of 18 upwards in the world.
2. Offer a meaningful and hands-on, intercultural experience serving projects and organisations that are fully committed to work towards a solution for a challenge that the Earth and/or the Human Society is facing.
3. Offer a support system to the participants throughout the year where they can deepen their experience by reflecting, sharing, learning new resources, getting inspiration, etc. And where they can lean on if something doesn't go as planned.
4. Work to be as accessible as possible to anyone regardless of their financial reality.



## Volunteering areas

### - Earth

Since the industrial revolution, humans -mostly from the developed world- have experienced a progressive disconnection from nature and its cycles. Different jobs that were connected with nature, needed some of it, and even depended on it, have been mechanised and secularised. And so, we have somehow lost the sense that our species is part of nature.

“... if we can understand the interdependence of all living beings, and understand that all living creatures – from trees to worms to humans – depend on each other, then we can live in harmony with ourselves, with other people and with nature.” — **Satish Kumar**



That is why we believe it's very important that at least a few months of people's lives are spent serving the planet and reconnecting with it. This volunteering area of Planetary Service has the goal of connecting young people to nature. It is a hands-on learning opportunity in a project or an organisation that is focused on solving challenges that the Earth is currently facing. It could look like volunteering on an organic/regenerative farm, on land restoration projects or tree planting projects, marine and ocean conservation organisations, sustainability projects, on a planet activist organisation, etc.

### - People Care

With the current technology, there is a feeling of connection and sympathy with different realities and challenges from all around the world. But at the same time, there is a growing wave of isolated people and a banalization of the actual problems. That is why, Planetary Service wants to get youth out in the world, to get them to experience different realities for themselves and have a real perspective on how people are doing and what the real struggles are in the projects and countries they go to. **Caring for other humans is key to our ability to live together as human societies.**

“In high school I volunteered at a camphill for one month, taking care of people with psychological and physical disabilities. I was struck by the humility and authenticity of

the many volunteers I met, as well as their practical attitude of “doing what it takes”. If every young person had the chance to contribute to the livelihood of someone who is dependent on others for their wellbeing, then perhaps there would be more humility and a greater desire to contribute to the world for the good of all.” — **Nakya Grimm**



How we interact and care for each other will define how we can continue to create cultures of care and wellbeing in the future. The goal of this volunteering area is to practise the art of being in service to others. To contribute to the wellbeing and life quality of those who depend on others for care. It could look like volunteering in projects for the old, the sick or the physically and/or psychologically disabled, living in communities for people with disabilities (e.g. camphills), volunteering in retirement homes, hospitals, homeless shelters, projects/organisations focused on socially excluded people, projects/organisations that work with abused women, etc.

## Importance of intercultural exchange (local or abroad)

With the complexity of our society and the challenges we are currently facing, it is very easy to fall into negative thinking and imagine a catastrophic future. But we believe that a diverse and peaceful world is possible. For that to be, we think it is vital that people experience different realities and cultures to observe and understand that there are multiple ways to live, work, relate, have faith, etc. Appreciating the inherent wealth and unique perspectives from different cultures, offers global connectedness and resilience to face together the social challenges of our time.

“I remember how it changed my life, and especially my view on the world, once I had been in South America for some months. It gives such a totally different perspective on your own country! It would be the greatest contribution I can think of for **world peace**. To learn “how on earth can we live with each other –learning and contributing” — **Rembert Biemond**



That is why we encourage the participants to go out of their own realities and volunteer in projects and organisations where there is an intercultural exchange.

By doing so, we think it can be a way for Planetary Service participants to examine and reflect on their own culture, beliefs and world-views. Additionally, it can be a way for participants to see projects and organisations that are working for a better future and experience for themselves that there are points of light and hope all around the world.

The intercultural experience could happen in different forms: It could take place in a whole different continent or country; It could also be by volunteering in a project/organisation (either local or abroad) where there are international participants; Or even, if participation happens in the same country, exploring the different cultures that reside there or the cultures from different collectives that cohabit the city or the country.

## How Does It Work?

### Hosting Projects

The Planetary Service Movement focuses on motivating youth to volunteer for the planet and their fellow human beings while accompanying them throughout their experience, and not so much through contacting placement projects and organisations. Having said this, hosting projects are key players in making this movement possible.

We do not wish to create another volunteering programme as such but rather, to consolidate a movement from existing programmes that already focus on Earth and People Care. We see ourselves as providers of volunteers and as a movement to which partner programmes/projects/organisations can join while continuing the work they do, with the addition of being able to offer a Planetary Service certificate to their volunteers to give even more value to the volunteering experience. Further, hosting projects will become part of a greater network of people and projects working towards similar goals.

### - Volunteering Programmes

The way we see this working is that the volunteering programmes that join the movement will collaborate by offering projects and organisations that they are partnered with and that fit into the criteria of Planetary Service (*explained below*). Partner programmes will specify in their website which projects are the ones with which youth can get a Planetary Service certificate.

## Individual Projects and Organisations

As a single project or organisation (that is not part of a bigger volunteering programme), we have an application form to which they can present what they do and how they would organise and manage the experience of the volunteers, and there will be a process of selection to see if the Planetary Service criteria for projects are met. Everyone is welcome to apply via this form to become a steward of the Planetary Service Movement.

## The criteria for hosting projects

- Being committed to solving Earth and/or People Care challenges.
- Having some tasks with which young people can help, 20-30 hours a week.
- Being able to offer food and accommodation for a whole year in exchange for the volunteering help.
- Being able to adapt to our mentoring framework.
- Offering caring support to the participants throughout their experience, with our assistance and mentoring framework.
- Having a basic level of English Language to be able to communicate.
- Promoting the idea of intercultural exchange for the volunteers.

*(There is a document with further information on our website).*

Participants will then choose the project or organisation to embark their year on based on the existing hosting projects that have been considered to meet the Planetary Service criteria.

As Planetary Service, we will cooperate with these volunteering programmes and projects in all the processes involved and will have a close involvement with all of them.

## Participants

The participants' experience consists of a one-year volunteering experience for young adults, to learn from and contribute to the planet and its people. Participants will organise their own experience by finding a project or organisation, local or international, to contribute to as volunteers in exchange for food and accommodation.

To participate, individuals will first have to apply via the participants form on the Planetary Service website. There will be a selection process to make sure



interested applicants meet the Planetary Service criteria. Once the participants are chosen, they will plan all their volunteering year (always with our support when needed): Choosing project/s and volunteering area/s, going in group or alone, booking travels, insurances, visas, etc. There are multiple possibilities on how the whole experience could end up looking, there is no right or wrong way to do it as long as its purpose is to serve the planet and/or the fellow human beings.

During the year mentoring sessions will be offered to the volunteers by the Planetary Service mentoring framework. These sessions will bring together the participants' experiences and allow them to make most of the whole Planetary Service experience. They will consist of weekly/biweekly Community Dialogues where a group of participants will meet to check-in from the different experiences. There will also be three to four Learning Sessions throughout the year consisting of workshops and talks to enrich the experience and give the participants resources and inspiration to navigate the world in a more sustainable way (*for more details on the Community Dialogues and Learning Sessions see following section*).

Depending on which project the participants decide to go to, there will also be different mentoring activities depending on the capacity of the hosting project. And at the end of the volunteering year there will be a guided closing process of the experience with all the year's volunteers to close the Planetary Service chapter. This is where the certificate will be given celebrating the completion of Planetary Service.

## Planetary Service - Mentoring Framework

### - Community Dialogues

Community Dialogues will consist of guided check-in groups for participants volunteering in different projects around the globe. There they will accompany each other through the year by meeting regularly (weekly or bi-weekly) and exchanging anecdotes, doubts, feelings... The idea is to create a safe space for the participants to connect, reflect, have an exchange of visions and accompany each other throughout the experience, while creating a network.

## - Learning Sessions

Learning Sessions will consist of conversations and workshops held for the participants to enrich their experience and give them resources, different perspectives on topics, inspiration, etc. to be able to embody a more sustainable life and deal with a world in crisis. There will be three to four Learning Sessions from different contributors throughout the year.

The topics of the Learning Sessions are still to be confirmed, but the themes will revolve around: Conviviality, Transition Towns, Non-Violent Communication and Emotional Resilience in crisis.

## - Planetary Service Certificate

We will recognize the Planetary Service participation by giving a certificate of completion at the end of the year to the participants. We see it as a way to recognize their work and also for them to have something which they can then add in their resume, portfolio, etc. By giving this certificate the participants will also start to be part of the Planetary Service Movement network, where they will be able to contact and connect with other participants and projects and start a global community focused on caring for the earth and the human beings. Slowly creating a culture of mutual support, wellbeing and care for the environment and each other.

## - Network

On completing the Planetary Service year, every volunteer will graduate to become Planetary Service alum and join the network of fellow alumni allowing them to share experiences, work projects and future plans as well as organise meet ups. Being part of the Planetary Service Movement allows you to be part of a greater network of people and projects/organisations that are working for a more sustainable, peaceful and humane future and you will be able to co-create, connect, share knowledge/experiences/networks/etc. Uniting efforts and resources to make it happen.

## Logistics & Finances

We expect participants to organise and plan their experience and book their own travel methods (as needed) as well as be responsible for their own travel and health insurance.

Practically, participants won't have any daily costs associated with volunteering at an organisation. Room and board would be offered by hosting projects in exchange for their time and work contribution. We see hosting projects as co-collaborators of Planetary Service, and expect a commitment to supporting the best possible outcomes for the participants.

We are committed to accessibility and recognise that financial accessibility is not equally distributed. Our goal is that there is a fund/support available for those to whom partaking in Planetary Service is limited by finances. The details of these and other logistics will be further defined throughout the time and experiences of executing Planetary Service trials. **We are unfortunately not yet able to offer any financial support.**

## How to get it going

### The prototype

In order to bring this initiative into the world, the organisers plan to run a one-time pilot version to prototype the idea with 10-30 young people. This first group will consist of pioneer participants who are engaged and willing to contribute to a rich documentation of their experiences in diverse forms (video, writing, art, etc.), and open to develop the idea together with us during their Planetary Service year by giving feedback and input.

In the long term we imagine doing a very big call to young people to participate by networking with international organisations, universities, collectives and governments to endorse the idea of young people doing Planetary Service. However, for this prototype we have decided to keep our collaborations within the scope of directly supporting the pioneering group & the prototype year, in order to allow the project to learn and adapt in an agile way. This means that the participants of the prototype year will choose their volunteering spot from a handful of options that we will offer to them.

## Planning & Funding

We are currently under the umbrella of Evidenz Foundation financial and legal structure. It has given us the possibility of designing and developing the Planetary Service project, we call this the Design phase and On-boarding phase.

### **A) Design Phase (2022)**

In this first phase we have further designed the project until a point of publication. A small team has spent time working out a more detailed template of the year, including the name, logo, vision, mission, principles, guidelines, areas of volunteering descriptions, Community Dialogues and Learning Sessions, and support infrastructure. Further, the Planetary Service website went live and the movement has been publicly launched.

### **B) On-boarding Phase (2023)**

In this phase we have been focusing on contacting hosting projects and volunteering programmes as well as connecting with the target group and gathering participants. As such, the team is still focusing on logistics and detailing of the design. During this phase we will have to apply for a next round of funding with a budget that depends on the amount of participants & hosting projects that have committed.

### **C) Prototype Phase (2023-2024)**

This goes beyond the planning phase, and includes the launch of the Planetary Service prototype year. It includes logistical support, participant support, online Community Dialogues and Learning Sessions, ongoing public sharing of participants' experiences via various channels (photos, videos, stories), a final meetup for feedback and evaluating the experience and the certification procedures. In this phase we currently imagine a small team working part time, depending on the number of participants.

### **D) Review, Adapt and Continue (2024 and beyond)**

In order to explore the continuation of this project it is vital to collect and share the insights and learnings from the prototype year. Throughout the Prototype Phase there will be ongoing documentation, from participants, hosting projects and the Planetary Service team. In this final phase the focus will be on compiling this documentation into a cohesive set of artefacts (mini-documentary, synthesis

report, testimonials, survey results) that can be shared with funders and the supporting network of Planetary Service. We will then focus on defining and developing the idea that we have for the Planetary Service Movement, adding all the given feedback from participants, collaborators, advisory council, etc. so that the movement can keep growing.

## Who are we

### History & Team

Coining the term “Planetary Service” happened somewhere around 2018, when Rembert Biemond started to speak about it on various occasions, to test reactions and possibilities. Speaking about it in the board of the Swiss foundation Evidenz the idea got some support.

More momentum came in at the beginning of 2022 when various participants of different years of The International Youth Initiative Program (YIP) decided to take on an idea after reading an editorial in the YIP Network Newsletter (YNN): *“I have the following dream. For hundreds of years, maybe longer, the 18-year-olds were drafted and then forced to serve in the military. Military service. **How would that be if we could replace that with Planetary Service – on a voluntary basis [...]**”*.

That is when Nakyta Grimm (YIP2), Livia Strub (YIP 10), Pieter Ploeg (YIP 2) and also Rembert gathered to materialise this big dream and start actually a project called: Planetary Service. They sat and organised the steps to make it happen, and started the first phase, the Design Phase. During this period they shared the evolution of the project with the YIP alumni network, and there were people that got interested with this project. From there, Teresa Ramos Serra (YIP 9) joined the team as a new member.

Since then, we are a small initiative group consisting of Teresa as the coordinator and designer, Rembert as regular supporter and mentor, and recently Rebeca López Walker joined the team as the coordinator of communication and networking. The rest of the team, Nakyta, Livia and Pieter, are taking a more sporadic supportive role and have become part of the Council.

In the long term we imagine a team that can take care of different tasks to make Planetary Service work smoothly. We would divide the different tasks in five departments: one regarding communication and social media, another one regarding the follow up of the participants experiences including the

organisation of the Community Dialogues and Learning Sessions, another department related to networking and economic funds, one about all the office, economy and legal matters, and finally a position that coordinates all the others to keep the project alive and moving forwards.

## Council

The Council aims to support the project and keep its vision. It consists of a diverse group of people, in ages, culture and background who commits to supporting and offering feedback throughout the project. The first promoters of Planetary Service, have now become part of the Council.

## Legal Carrier

Currently, we are under the legal and economic umbrella of Evidenz Foundation and figure as one of their projects. Yet our intention is to become a Non-Governmental Organisation to act as an independent body to carry Planetary Service. This would ensure that Planetary Service is a neutral body, which can create diverse international partnerships.

## Collaborators

We have now started a collaboration with two other organisations: World Social Initiative Forum (WSIF) and World Goetheanum Asociacion (WGA). They are helping us with networking with different projects that they are already partnered with, and one of the WSIF workers, Nicole Asis, is doing 7h/week on behalf of Planetary Service to help with communication matters, amongst others. They are collaborating to make Planetary Service a reality and are themselves working towards similar goals. We will reach out to further organisations engaged in similar realms.

## Meet the Core Team



### **Rembert Biemond (1958)**

Now in my sixties, looking back I see that my professional life has been a meandering journey with the three red threads of “new economy”, youth work, and curating art. Born and raised in the Netherlands I later lived and worked in Switzerland and Germany for longer periods of my life. Now based in Sweden the two biggest projects I am involved in are an organic tea company in the Indian Himalayas, and Sekem in Egypt a very successful greening the desert project, which also includes a university for sustainable development. I believe we are on this planet to learn and to contribute. Planetary Service tries to make that very concrete on a global scale. I am excited to launch a prototype and hope that in the future this could lead to a global movement.



### **Teresa Ramos Serra (1998)**

My beginnings in life were placed in a small town in a rural area of Catalonia, Spain. From the surroundings I lived in, a strong bond with the natural world was created. When I was five, my family started a Waldorf School at our house to which I was never able to attend but with which I was always very involved and inspired. I myself went to a traditional school all my life, and having both methodologies very close I developed a very critical view on education and society. For these reasons, I have always had an impulse to make the world a better place. That is why I decided to participate in the ninth edition of the International Youth Initiative Program (2016-2017) which was the beginning of a very profound personal transformation that broadened my horizons and understanding of life and the world, by attending various programmes and meeting many inspiring people. After all those experiences it was clear to me that I wanted to study Education Sciences (2018-2022) for I strongly believe that the change has to originate from the base of society, and for me, that is education. I wanted to be able to accompany youth through the transformational transition towards adulthood. And also I wanted to be able to accompany young children in nature surroundings to create strong and solid roots with the earth since the beginning of their lives. My call now is to create spaces where we, as humans, can explore what is our function and place in a balanced ecosystem putting nature in the centre and as the measure of it all, and work towards a more nature-connected and sustainable society.



### **Rebeca Lopez Walker (1996)**

Life for me began in Germany in the winter of 1996, we moved around a lot, not only between countries but just the house itself. I lived in Stuttgart, Madrid, North London and Birmingham before my parents moved back to Spain and my brother and I became independent adults. Since then I have kept moving, working in France and Germany,

travelling for a while and then spending some time in Spain again, this time on the eastern coast by the mediterranean sea.

I attended the International Youth Initiative Program in 2016- 2017 and went on to study Liberal Arts and Sciences (BA) in Maastricht, the Netherlands (2018-2021) focusing on politics, law and sociology. I have always been interested in education both formal and non-formal, how people learn and how as a society we enable or hinder learning to occur which led me to focus the last half year of my bachelors degree to educational sociology more focusing on literature of first-generation academics and students. Throughout my adult life I have worked in one way or another in the hospitality industry with a keen interest in food; both how we connect to it from produce to a meal as well as the cultural and social aspects.

## Meet the Council



### **Livia Strub (1997)**

Ever since I was little, I'd always felt that there needed to be purpose and reason behind the work I'd end up doing, to do something "good". Leaving home and living overseas helped me realise the tool bag I came with through having grown up on an organic farm and having gone to a Steiner school.

My adventures in Europe led me to take part in YIP in 2017/2018 where I was able to continue both discovering my own skills as well as learning and practising new skills. This was a space where I could more actively pursue my passions and learn about how I could implement them in the world. I spent several years after that working in hospitality, events management and outdoor education before moving back to New Zealand (NZ) where I grew up. Currently I am studying a double degree in Global Studies and Commerce at the University of Auckland, focusing on sustainability, entrepreneurship and sustainable business practices. I lead the gardening team of the largest tertiary sustainability club in the country, and am very involved in the urban farming and regenerative agriculture space in Auckland.

For the last 10 years, I have been involved with facilitating a rites of passage programme for teenagers in NZ, marking the transition from child to young adult. Currently a small



team of us is in the process of developing a rites of passage programme for the age group of 18 - 35-year olds, where participants are invited to step into authentic being while marking a threshold in their lives through rites of passage and ritual.



### **Nakyta Grimm (1989)**

Born and raised in Vancouver, Canada, I grew up on a wild mountainside outside of the city where bears and other wildlife regularly visited our garden. My childhood cultivated a deep love of nature, as well as a deep curiosity about how we can live in harmony with the natural and human world.

At age 16 I spent 4 weeks in Honduras, as part of a nurses without borders team that was bringing basic health care into rural areas. It was a raw experience that triggered me to question my basic assumptions and beliefs about my own culture.

My learning and work has been diverse. I studied at YIP in Sweden (2009/2010), worked as a volunteer coordinator for an art exhibition (2012), studied agro-ecology in India (2012), co-founded Summer of Soil (2013), and worked for YIP (2013/2014). I am currently working part-time as a chef on an organic farm outside of Amsterdam. At the moment, my learning edge is in exploring “The Work that Reconnects” from Joanna Macy” and Non-violent Communication. I am a mother of three young children, and have spent the last few years providing a warm basis for their unfolding lives. It is with my children in mind that I want to bring my inspiration to this project.



### **Pieter Ploeg (1985)**

After graduating from YIP Sweden in 2010 I have dedicated my efforts towards accelerating the transition towards a regenerative society on a thriving and resilient living earth. I strongly believe soil is the acupuncture point through which we can restore our relationship with the earth, and tackle biodiversity, food, climate and resilience challenges.

My learning and work journey has been diverse, and has given me a wide range of skills. I co-founded Summer of Soil (2013), worked for YIP (2010-2014), during which I developed the Sustainability Challenges consultation projects as well as Mission U in Berlin. In 2012 I was part of launching the International Partnership for Transformative Learning. In 2016 I graduated with a Masters in Strategic Leadership towards Sustainability in Karlskrona, Sweden.

Currently I am part of the Commonland Landscape Development & Support team as Design Strategist and Facilitator with a focus on using Social Labs to cultivate transformative systemic change and create an enabling environment for the transition towards thriving ecosystems and communities.

## Thank You!

Thank you for reading this far. Putting together this document has been a chance to refine the idea of Planetary Service as a visioning team. By running a pilot project we aim to collect learnings and experiences and create clear documentation to make a case for Planetary Service into the future, supported by international partners and participants. We hope this document sparked your inspiration and enthusiasm to see Planetary Service into the world, supporting engaged contributions from young people in service of earth and communities around the globe. We are open to collaborations and welcome feedback & support. Please feel warmly invited to contact us!

## More information

**Website:** [www.planetaryservice.org](http://www.planetaryservice.org)

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