

# **A Blockchain-Based Platform for Global Deliberative, Direct Democracy**

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## **1. Abstract**

### **Revolutionary blockchain technology enables global direct democracy breakthrough**

Ours are exciting times. A tangled web of interconnected global crises have been brewing for decades due to a lack of coordinated and responsible world governance. Just when the need for governance reform is most dire, a new exciting technology called **the Blockchain** offers for the first time in human history the opportunity to create a Global Direct Democracy!

### **People everywhere are angry and ready to try something new**

Human tendencies toward greed and corruption have depleted natural resources and brought human culture and our environment to the brink. A desperate hunger for participation in direct democracy exist now both in the developing world, which has not been sufficiently represented in existing global institutions, as well as in the developed world, where corruption and lack of accountability of elected officials has reached critical mass.

### **The referendum power of a global direct democracy is the solution to the failings of representative governance and corrupting concentration of power**

Statistics indicate that the largest economic gains in the past decades have gone to what is commonly called “the 1%” – half of whom are based in the US (1). Fair redistribution of resources and equal sharing of political power is urgently needed.

A global direct democracy with ultimate referendum power is the only way to sustainably prevent the corruption, conflicts of interests and abuses of power that have been always associated with representative systems.

Global access to cell phones is at 75% and climbing rapidly (2). This provides the necessary tool for participation and combines with the increasing numbers of tech-savvy youth to make this a realistic and practical solution. (No local government facilitation or permission is required.)

### **Careful design of the technology platform ensures equal access, wise deliberation and efficient decision-making**

A well-designed deliberative process will ensure equal participation and education as needed. Combined with the moral compass of shared aspirational goals, such a process will enable regular people across the globe to make wise decisions.

Statistical sampling techniques can be used to select relatively small **deliberation groups**, much in the way citizen juries are selected in many legal systems, to reduce the decision burdens to a manageable level. **Global citizen referendums** can be called to confirm their decisions when needed.

Since these deliberation groups are randomly and automatically selected and constantly changing, it becomes impossible for special interest groups to capture or manipulate these panels, **making entrenched career politicians a thing of the past.**

### **Ongoing polling processes allow continuous course-correction**

Elections are typically held only every 2-4 years, after which constituencies are betrayed to do the bidding of financial sponsors. Our model provides an ongoing process of deliberations and global referendums to course-correct much more frequently. For that reason, special-interest groups will no longer be able to hijack each election with excessive advertisement and campaign financing.

Instead, the global democracy platform will provide balanced information, crafted through democratic deliberation, on all referendums. Automatic and human translation services will ensure that everyone can participate equally.

Following the principle of “**one person, one vote**,” only natural persons (not corporations nor governments) will have an account and thereby a say in this **global democratic process platform we call 2GATHER**. Each account is linked to individual biometric data that is impossible to duplicate or fake, but which can be verified over a standard cell phone.

### **The blockchain provides transparency, accountability and self-enforcing agreements through an incorruptible, permanent record of every decision**

Once recorded in the blockchain, **data can never be erased or changed** and therefore a **permanent, incorruptible record is created**. As the blockchain stores all records in the form of smart contracts, they can be verified if disputes of fraud or non-fulfillment of contracts should arise.

Furthermore, it is possible to create self-enforcing agreements that automatically trigger contingencies as needed. For example, if an elected official who signs onto an anti-corruption agreement is found to have embezzled funds he or she can be instantaneously removed from office and a surrogate installed.

The blockchain is also the foundation of all cryptocurrencies, like Bitcoin and Ethereum, and thus 2GATHER can facilitate and track peer-to-peer financial transactions as well.

The blockchain technology itself is a decentralized, open source and distributed system owned **cooperatively by all humankind that cannot be bought, shut down nor manipulated by any special interest**. It lives on millions of independent servers around the world. Due to the use of cryptography, any attempts at manipulating or hacking the software will immediately be noticed.

The development and test phase of the blockchain platform can be managed on a relatively small budget. Once implemented, the system will use small fractions of the financial transactions that flow through the system, like a user tax, to sustain itself.

### **A campaign to engage global citizens through polling and advocate for reform of existing power structures works in tandem**

While the 2GATHER platform is being developed, we also propose a global poll on goals and **reforms of currently existing power structures, namely of the UN**, as the largest global representative institution. The poll's results will be used to advocate for reform. If changes stall, the next step, a global referendum, will insist on the demanded changes or revoke the UN mandate.

As global populations will learn to increasingly use and trust the 2GATHER platform, self-organizing segments of humanity will crowdfund, develop and implement projects they envision. This crowdfunding mechanism will be tax-deductible, rerouting monies away from corrupted and non-responsive government bodies.

### **The 2GATHER platform will continually work toward our aspirational goals in sustainable bottom-up fashion**

This ratcheting mechanism will be an efficient tool to address and implement humanitarian and environmental changes that have been sabotaged by special-interest lobby-politics for centuries. As the 2GATHER platform develops alongside the reform of global institutions, non-compliant representatives and corporate interests that contravene the people's welfare will be sidelined by popular global referendum.

## ***2. Description of the Model***

**To organize more effective global governance, we suggest a multi-step program:**

1. Identification of global values, threats and goals through worldwide polling
2. Declaration of goals and formulation of a new Global Human Rights Declaration
3. Building a blockchain-based platform for a global deliberative, direct democracy
4. Reforming current global governmental structures
5. Full integration of all measures mentioned above into a ratcheting mechanism to reach binding agreements towards goals

Each of these steps is described in detail below.

### **1. Identification of global values, threats and goals through worldwide polling**

**Commission a large poll of diverse and representative global citizens from all demographics to identify aspirational goals, values, threats and priorities.**

**Our suggested poll would have three important goals:**

- \* to **obtain unmediated, direct input from real people around the globe**, which can be used to cross-check and inform statements of aspirational goals, values, threats and priorities prepared by representative global bodies, which may be subject to bias from special interests.
- \* to use the collected data to **develop a new Global Human Rights Declaration** that will be used as a basis for a global referendum that, if adopted, would become binding and replace the current non-binding UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948.
- \* to **begin outreach for the direct democracy platform 2GATHER**. A database of potential participants could begin to be compiled through such a poll. This database of poll participants would also serve to help identify repression of the platform at later stages.

Corporations or governments will not have a vote, since this poll is to establish the actual goals of earth's population for their own well-being. While there have been 17 non-binding "Sustainable Development Goals" identified by the UN, they have been developed by a small, non-representative group.

According to a 2017 World Bank data survey (3), we currently have a global mobile cell phone penetration of about 75%, with about **90% having access to phone usage**. That means, the polls identifying peoples' priorities can be conducted without governments' permissions or local politics roadblocks as an act of personal choice.

In the polls and with the direct democracy platform generally, there may exist a reluctance of non-democratic governments at the nation-state and tribal levels to allow subjugated sub-groups a chance to participate. The platform is built with an organic and voluntary – yet still representative – adoption model and can accommodate this type of resistance or reluctance.

A global publicity/educational campaign will be necessary to encourage participation, using the same cost-effective technology.

**Achieving consensus on broad value-based, aspirational goals and principles is easy compared to negotiating specific binding agreements among existing parties and special interests**

Identifying aspirational goals as an ethical compass urges us in the direction of a more just, equitable, prosperous and sustainable globe.

Once poll results are compiled, global forums should be convened to advance the conversation on shared global human aspirations.

**Various aspirational goals will emerge, perhaps including:**

- \* the common interest of peace, ending violence and coercion, and extending human rights

- \* developing shared infrastructure (e.g. alternative energy, transportation, education, food security)

- \* protecting the environment and ensuring a sustainable human relationship with it

developing uniform regulations, standards and codes to improve global trade, mobility, traffic and tourism

- \* reforming transparency of money flows to discourage criminal activity, political bribery, reckless price gouging and predatory business-practices based on excessive greed

- \* curbing corporate power and wealth to take the power back into “the commons”

Where there is divergence between the goals that emerge from the citizen polls and the representative forums, details on this divergence can be fed back to into the process. If nothing else, this information will help to identify and reveal various special interests and their destructive efforts to prevent broader public consensus.

In the multi-polar world that is now emerging, this information can help those supporting the public consensus to apply diplomatic, economic or public moral pressure to join the consensus moving towards the stated aspirational goals.

### **Inclusion of women and of younger generation into the political process:**

Only 15% of political decision-makers worldwide are currently women. (4). Of the 193 countries represented in the UN, only 19 are lead by women. Women as well as world citizens age 40 and under have been relentlessly marginalized from participation in the political process. The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) reports that people between the ages of 20 and 44 make up 57% of the world's voting age population but only 26% of the world's Members of Parliament (5).

As the younger generation will be the only one still around when long-term politics come to fruition, we consider it of utmost importance to integrate them into the process. Since our model heavily relies on modern technology, the younger generation will have a convenient head start in this department.

## **2. Declaration of goals and formulation of a new Human Rights Declaration**

The global gathering of issues, threats and goals will result in a priority list of global human goals and a new "Global Human Rights Declaration."

Since the global survey compiles the majority of ALL voices on the planet it can be argued that this **poll constitutes a mandate of humanity** and should therefore create local, national and international debate as well be adopted by the UN General Assembly. If these government bodies refuse to acknowledge their constituency's will and are not adjusting their policies accordingly, **one could argue they have lost their global mandate.**

If the UN Security Council should choose to veto the adoption of the new Global Human Rights Declaration, a worldwide citizen's referendum should generate enough public pressure to either **force adoption of the first binding Human Rights Declaration in the history of humanity– or make public the lost mandate of the UN Security Council.**

The development of a global direct democracy platform will broaden public participation and force the current representative systems to either listen to their constituencies – or admit their lack of a mandate. The development of a **binding Global Human Rights Declaration** will create the precedence and framework within which decisions by global referendum can be made.

The Global Human Rights Declaration will act like a global bill of rights and will generate a mandate for decisions that do not contravene our basic values as stated in the Declaration.

### **3. Building a blockchain-based platform for a global deliberative, direct democracy**

**A global direct, deliberative democracy is possible now.**

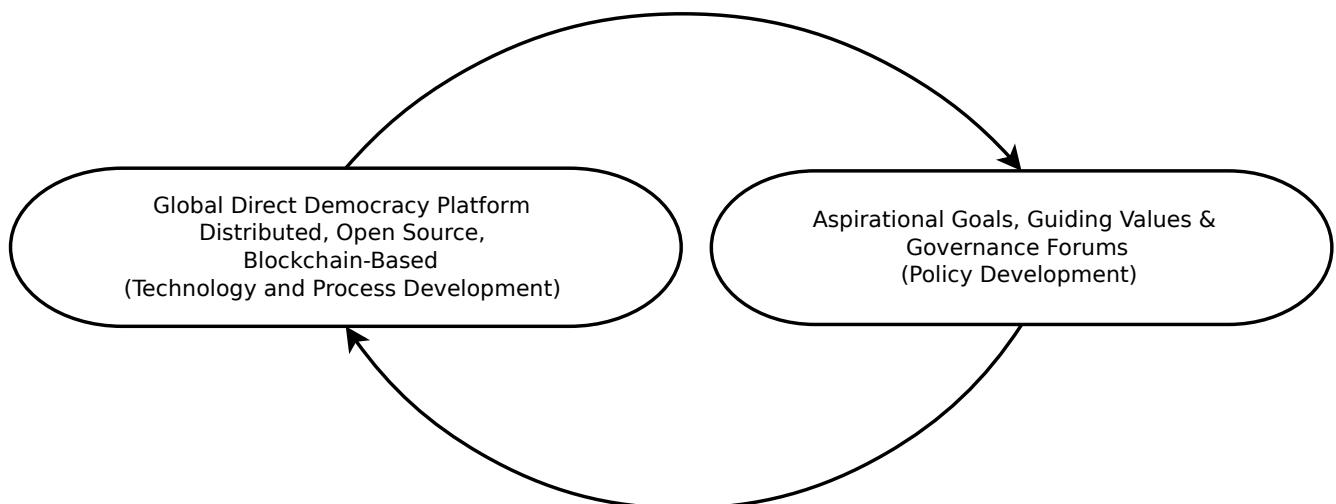
This model proposes and explains in detail how such a direct democracy can be implemented and operated through a new technological platform coupled with processes to engage the global citizenry directly.

This platform we call **2GATHER** can reach everyone on the globe who has access to a simple (cell) phone, which is now 90% of humanity.

**2GATHER can surface issues of concerns, allows for dialog and deliberation and guarantees accountability in a way that was never possible before.**

**This model will be instituted through a voluntary, emergent bottom-up process, guided by consensus-based aspirational goals, over a period of time.**

Our model relies on an **iterative and expanding mechanism** whereby the technology and process development on one hand, and the policy and governance development on the other hand grow in sophistication, adoption and influence in a mutually reinforcing way.



As a simplification to clarify different stages of its development, we will refer to **two phases**, but it should be understood that these phases are not distinct but grow organically from one into the other.

\* **Pilot and Experimentation Phase** – An initial technology platform is developed and deployed in multiple competing variations. Each is tested and improved through use by a diverse, representative group of citizens from around the globe.

\* **Full Global Implementation** – The platform has been revised and improved many times and is thoroughly tested, widely praised and supported by millions of citizen users. A push for universal adoption is made with support of a broad coalition of existing governments, NGOs and other groups.

**An underlying blockchain creates a secure, auditable, permanent record of decisions and actions, accessible to all and under the control of none, providing a layer of accountability.**

A distributed, global digital database, specifically a “blockchain,” forms the technical foundation for the data in 2GATHER. Blockchains are a relatively recent innovation, initially demonstrated in 2008 as the technical foundation of Bitcoin, the first **cryptocurrency**(6). The crypto-prefix refers to the central use of cryptography, the science of ensuring data integrity and privacy, in implementing cryptocurrencies and blockchains generally.

Cryptography is widely used on the internet to protect everything from credit card information used for online shopping to verifying your passwords to ensuring privacy on some text messaging systems. The same core cryptographic methods are used by individuals, corporations and even the military.

The name “blockchain” refers to the fact that data is stored in time-stamped and cryptographically linked blocks of a fixed size. The time-stamps ensure that data records and transaction records (e.g. financial or contractual) can be traced through time to produce a ledger of accounts. The **cryptographic links ensure that the data cannot be modified** or revised by anyone without the modification being easily detectable(7).

Anyone can create a server – or **node** – to host an instance of the blockchain. The entire history of every transaction ever made is available for anyone to inspect and verify because the entire blockchain is replicated by each person or organization who hosts a blockchain node.

Furthermore, the safety of the data in the blockchain is protected because there are so many separate people running nodes that no one person or entity could alter a majority of nodes so as to rewrite history or place false transactions. In these ways, the **blockchain inherently makes use of democratic principles**.

Since the creation of Bitcoin, several generations of blockchain technologies have been innovated. One of the most exciting innovations was the creation of **Ethereum** in 2015, which made possible unlimited and arbitrary **smart contracts** to be placed in the blockchain. These smart contracts, which are essentially pseudo-legal computer code, combined with the data in



the blockchain, can be used to monitor and enforce nearly any type of contract and agreement – including of course binding votes, decisions and agreements that are an essential part of 2GATHER.

The foreseeable future of the **blockchain is the creation of a global supercomputer-network**, accessible to all and under the control of no one. It is the creation of a new social/contractual layer to the internet that will **soon become as common as wifi hotspots today**. This has already led to the availability of a global cryptocurrency under the control of no individual nation(8).

### **2GATHER will also have access to all the benefits of cryptocurrencies**

Cryptocurrencies allow for instant, efficient, peer-to-peer transactions that do not require third parties (like banks) to provide clearing and transaction services nor fees. Using cryptocurrencies, two individuals can transfer any amount of funds between each other in a matter of seconds, without the assistance of any existing institutions.

While there is a need to provide some monitoring in order to prevent money laundering and crime, the benefits of cryptocurrencies are so great that corporations like JP Morgan and consortium efforts like the Hyperledger Project(9) have started using this technology.

Even sovereign nations like China, Russia, Singapore and Iceland are already experimenting with them, with others to follow quickly in their footsteps.

### **Every action on the platform is traceable to exactly one and only one real, human person, ensuring that accountability is possible.**

Because only living, human individuals can officially participate and vote in our model, the direct democracy principle of “one person one vote” is guaranteed. Powerful corporations have no rights above or equal to natural persons in this system.

**Each person on the globe has one and only one account in this system, verified through biometric data** like retinal analysis recorded in a short video from your phone or computer, or possibly voice analysis or fingerprints. **Your account and your data, including your biometrics, are encrypted** on your device and fundamentally private to you. You only share what you choose to, when you need to. This will provide traceable accountability and limit abuses of power.

Initial efforts at a self-sovereign digital identity have been undertaken by organizations like the **Sovrin Foundation**(10).

**The proposed technology platform can simultaneously protect privacy for users and ensure transparency and accountability for people holding public authority. Public representatives can be required to provide appropriate transparency as a condition of their election or appointment.**

The platform goal of ensuring privacy is critical to ensure that powerful interests **cannot identify and squash dissent** expressed or reforms initiated by any individual. Consider the

case of a human rights or union organizer. If all their efforts to mobilize affected workers were visible on the platform, their advocacy could be detected early and stopped through violence or other types of coercion.

On the other hand, the platform goals of **transparency and accountability** are necessary to ensure fulfillment of obligations related to agreements entered into by holders of public office, and to prevent covert abuses of power, criminal activities and other breaches of values adopted by sub-groups of users.

In the same example of the union organizer, with transparency and accountability, the actions of the employer to undermine the organizing activities would be visible to the public and public exposure and boycotts would be possible to end such abuses of power.

2GATHER makes it possible on an agreement by agreement basis to implement **transparency requirements** for participants, or for their representatives to make transparent certain limited aspects of their private data (e.g. tax filings, corporate ownership interests) **as a condition of their election.**

Legal courts will also have the power to unilaterally force disclosure of private data when court orders are issued. It may be wise to limit these kind of enforceable disclosures only to formally elected representatives at first before considering making them enforceable on private citizens.

**Random statistical sampling techniques are used to select “deliberation groups” to discuss issues and make decisions. This ensures fairness, efficiency and avoids unreasonable time demands.**

Through random statistical sampling, manageable subgroups of all constituencies around the globe are selected to share their opinions and perspectives on issues, much the way selection for jury duty works. Individuals provide their input free from manipulation or coercion, on local, regional and global levels.

Through a rigorous process that cross-references and double checks these results, it is possible for people to be involved in important issues without being overwhelmed.

Using the user taxes and other resource collected by the platform, these deliberation groups are paid fairly for their time, much like juries.

If you are in a developing nation you may access the system through voice messages and commands or text messages using your basic cell phone. Great attention will be put to ensure a practical interface that makes equal access and influence in ongoing deliberations possible through voice calls, voice messages and text messages.

If you are in the developed world you may also access it through your desktop computer, smart phone or other voice-activated devices.

**It will be a priority of the platform to ensure equitable access to decision making everywhere.** Automated translation, backed by expert human translators, makes it possible for these deliberation groups to work across languages.

**Evolving process tools, informed by the best social science and verified for effectiveness in practice, help citizens to deliberate together productively and find win-win solutions wherever possible.**

Sophisticated **process tools** that are continuously improving and leveraging the latest social science, enable the system to go beyond simple polls and voting to offer **deliberative democracy**(11), in which participating citizens can dialogue with each other, sharing information and perspectives in structured ways to find new understanding and common ground. In this way the system can help to develop majorities and consensus on the best solutions for all.

**Deliberation groups may call on education and experts when expertise is needed, much in the way expert witnesses can be called in a jury deliberation.**

It is a core principle and assumption of this model that issues of **any complexity can be successfully understood and deliberated by non-experts**. As Einstein has said, “If you can’t explain it to a six year old, you don’t understand it yourself.” In this way, we eliminate abuses of power created intentionally or unintentionally through technocratic obfuscation.

**The core software and hardware implementing the platform are open source**(12), helping to ensure that it does all and only what it claims to do.

All of 2GATHERs computer code can be reviewed by anyone on the planet. It also facilitates continuous improvement and security fixes. This is how other open source platforms have come to be dominant in industry, for example, the Linux operating system(13).

It will be an important practical aspect of the system to allow people to form groups to coordinate actions over time. But unlike existing legal frameworks in some countries, these groups will never be legally considered “people.” They exist only so long as they have the support of their constituent members and have no voting rights.

Furthermore, because such groups are explicitly initiated by citizen members/users of the platform, accountability naturally falls through to individual humans and can be reflected in their blockchain records.

### **Possible special-interest roadblocks to implementing 2GATHER**

There might be attempts in the mainstream media to criminalize or smear 2GATHER, as it diminishes the power of the currently established elites. Part of the roll-out strategy of 2GATHER should be to familiarize citizens with these typical corporate shenanigans beforehand that seek to divide and disable the population.

An open question in the initial phase is **how openly the ultimate intention of 2GATHER should be communicated**: The goal to develop a base of power held directly by the people of the world that will in time challenge the power of existing institutions and special interests.

While 2GATHER is being developed and user adoption is growing it will be vulnerable to co-option. It may be necessary for the platform to be portrayed as a novelty and harmless new social media tool until users can wield sufficient power through the platform to defend most assaults.

On the other hand, revealing the ultimate goal of the platform early may help to generate interest and speed adoption. Once people realize that they have real efficacy in addressing world problems it will result in additional adoption.

**Initial funding requirements are modest and costs per user will decrease exponentially over time.**

Initial funding, which could be as modest as \$10-20M during the pilot phase, could be provided by interested foundations, governments or crowd funding around the globe.

If user satisfaction with the system is given the highest importance, the direct democracy platform will likely grow in adoption exponentially. Like all social networks, this platform would exhibit positive feedback dynamics because each satisfied user would invite their contacts to also be users(14). Because the cost of operating the system grows linearly and the user-base exponentially, costs of adding new users should be quite modest.

**Growth and development of the platform will follow research and best practices from the study of innovation**

A great deal of research and study has been dedicated to the process of successful innovation, product and market development, both in the for-profit sector as well as the NGO and government sectors(15).

There are a great many models of successful innovation but nearly all of them uphold the high value of an **iterative** approach, seeking to rapidly improve new prototypes and then test them quickly with users. It may also be wise to have several competing versions under development in the pilot phase so that they may learn from each other. This ensures that limited resources are used to develop and improve the features that users most desire.

The 2GATHER platform software is uniquely suited to this approach because it allows for revisions even on a daily basis, making it very easy to iterate and get feedback from users.

**Going to scale: Full implementation**

Funding to take the system to scale would be substantially larger, but positive results and user satisfaction surveys obtained during the pilot phase would greatly lower the risk and

increase the attractiveness for partners that join later. **It is possible to grow the system affordably and organically.**

The financial resources needed to support 2GATHER could easily come from a very small fee/tax levied on all financial transaction that are facilitated by the system. Such a financial mechanism would be progressive rather than regressive, transparent and easy to implement.

**Because power ultimately rests with every human person across the globe in this technology-enabled direct democracy, abuses of power are fundamentally limited.**

Real people will always have the power of the referendum at their fingertips, to recall corrupt representatives, to investigate fraud and abuse and to put new solutions on the table for real consideration.

Because the system rests on a blockchain, results and reputation of various transactions are permanently recorded and recalled to ensure that untrustworthy actors cannot continue any discovered malfeasance.

**In time, this platform for global direct democracy may even replace existing institutions.**

Because power is vested in real people rather than existing organizations which may develop their own self-interest distinct from those they are supposed to represent, organizational groups built on top of 2GATHER can rise and fall away organically as the underlying interests of the global constituency change and adapt over time.

**Whether these organizations are “businesses” or “governments” will no longer be useful distinctions.** Initiatives and organizations will be formed with a wide and inherently unlimited range of values and goals in inherently unique combinations, as unique and changeable as the individuals who put them forth and back them.

**Eventually, we will find a way to efficiently and effectively govern ourselves globally with transparency, accountability and flexibility that will produce the greatest good for the greatest number.** This proposal provides the process and compass to allow us to continuously move further and further into our democratic aspirations.

#### **4. Reforming current global governmental structures**

While the blockchain technology 2GATHER is being developed and tested, some current global institutions need to be reformed to address pressing issues.

## **Current, inadequate global structures and problems**

We currently have various global institutions that have failed to keep pace with the rapid changes in today's world. In the absence of effective global governance, new technologies, environmental degradation, globalization, rising interconnectivity, mobility and the rise of exploitative global powers have developed with little regulations from representative governments.

The UN as a post-WWII decision-making body to regulate international trade, law, peace and health has been an ineffective tool since its inception. Its center of power, **the UN Security Council with its five permanent members, has used its veto powers to block self-corrective action.**

The UN today represents 193 countries but has become a tool mainly for a few powerful countries to maintain their lead and to redirect blame for global crises to poorer, mostly African and Middle Eastern, countries.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989, the U.S. seized the moment to declare itself to be the unilateral police force. A series of costly and failed U.S. military interventions and the financial rise of other nation states have lead to an emerging multi-polar world. **Governance structures should reflect this power shift.**

Since the U.S. has not become a signatory to central treaties of the U.N. (e.g. the International Criminal Court), the UN has been a toothless paper tiger, unable to hold the main aggressors and culprits accountable. The five UN Security Council Member States, charged with guarding worldwide peace, are in fact the biggest arms-dealer in the world(16).

Global corporate alliances like the WTO have overpowered democratically elected, national governments and are enforcing their free-trade agendas in court against the will of the citizens and governments of most nations.

Prominent international economical forums (like G20, OECD, WTO, World Economic Forum Davos etc.) are mainly representing the interest of elites in a few privileged Western countries. The existing global management platforms of commerce, finance and health are impotent due to corruption and the **non-binding nature of important agreements.**

While the G20 represents only 43 countries that represent about 85% of the worlds GWP (Gross World Product), it only represents 64% of the world's population. Several of the worlds 20 most populated countries, like Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Philippines and Thailand, are not even represented(17).

In order to initiate trust between the colonial/industrialized nations who have reigned with an iron fist for centuries and the weary developing countries who have experienced centuries of exploitation and dishonesty, **a new decision-making process needs to be implemented in**

**the UN if this institution wants to maintain the crucial world government role it currently occupies but doesn't fill.**

Nations are now pursuing their interests more cooperatively through international institutions – rather than by war or colonialism - and are expanding their spheres of influence. The deepening and irreversible process of **globalization is forcing countries to adjust the balance between self-interest and mankind's interest of survival and sustainability.**

### **Reforming the UN**

We suggest reform using the same **global direct democracy tools** we wish to make available for all world citizens. The UN needs to address pressing, current issues of environmental degradation, global warming, hunger and poverty, technological unemployment, nuclear disarmament and peace in its general assembly.

**The world's evolution can no longer be held captive by five privileged countries with veto powers in the UN Security Council.**

### **Dissolve the UN Security Council through pressure by global referendum**

In the interest of global survival and sustainability, the most pressing issues need to be identified as the **issues threatening survival for the largest number of people.**

It is the mission of the UN to secure **well-being and survival for the maximum numbers of its global citizens**, no matter if this curbs corporate or governmental profits.

The goal of the UN reform is to render the body responsive and able to deal with current crisis. Two decades of stalled action on the security council reform have shown that the **UN is unable to reform itself** to deliver on the purposes, principles and promises of the UN charter. Adding a few more permanent members to the council will not end the gridlock.

**Our proposal is to dissolve the UN Security Council entirely by global, popular vote and withdrawal of its mandate and legitimacy(18).**

### **Undertake publicity campaigns to raise awareness of current non-representation**

A broad publicity campaign across all media, including social media, is necessary to create global awareness of the current political gridlock to motivate world citizens to participate in the initial poll and thereafter in a possible direct global referendum.

## **Reform the UN by direct democracy mandate**

Our model to reform the UN follows the same direct democracy strategy as our entire concept.

### **The ratcheting mechanism to enforce compliance with global direct democracy decisions includes the following steps:**

- 1) Identifying and publicizing the lack of democratic representation and transparency by global direct poll, followed by a global referendum
- 2) Withdrawal of the UN mandate to represent the world population
- 3) Investing funds in self-organizing, tax-deductible direct action projects, thereby depleting the tax-base of non-responsive government bodies
- 4) Circumventing ineffectual governance until total replacement or compliance is achieved

### **Redistribute votes in UN General Assembly**

Using the same ratcheting mechanism, we aim to implement a **new vote-distribution for the General Assembly**. Currently, each member state has one vote, independent of population size or GDP of each nation.

Based on the idea of the equal importance of every human life on this planet, **we suggest a distribution of votes based on population size**. This would give population-rich countries a chance to address their pressing issues.

### **Using the same global polling and referendum tools, we suggest global polls regarding these additional UN reform goals:**

- 1) Transparency - Each participating government must make public an annual balance sheet similar to existing corporate 10K filings
- 2) Binding majority agreements: All resolutions adapted by General Assembly with 2/3 majority are binding
- 3) UN headquarters on each continent
- 4) Representative, collective control of international finance institutions like the IMF and World Bank



## **Improve representation of women and youth**

As the UN states in their own Sustainable Global Growth Goals paper, none of the currently pressing issues can be addressed without adequate representation of two hidden majorities on this planet: women and people between 18-40 years of age.

### **Women**

In 2016, women represented only 22.8% of UN representatives (up from 11.3% in 1995). As of June 2017, only 2 countries worldwide have over 50% women in their national parliament: Rwanda and Bolivia. Nordic countries have 41.7% of women politicians.

A UN study found that countries governed by higher percentages of women have higher ratios of social equality, higher levels of health care and social services. The average of global women participation in politics is still below 20% (19).

Our reform model suggests an **affirmative action quota for women in the UN**. As successfully implemented in Germany in the 1980s, we suggest following a similar process after receiving a mandate through global popular referendum.

### **Participation of younger voters (18-40 of age)**

The majority of decision makers in today's politics and economy are white males between 50-75 years of age. They will not experience the long-term results of their policies nor be held accountable.

For that reason our model suggests the active inclusion/solicitation of younger environmental, political and social activists into the UN and the actual decision making process. The younger generation (18-40 years of age) constitutes for 65% of the world's population. This alone should be enough of a mandate to demand an **affirmative action quota for UN representative aged 18-40**.

Younger generations have become disillusioned by their gloomy perspective of global warming, nuclear war and job loss. They have often disengaged from the political process in hopelessness.

As the technology in our model is especially used by younger global citizens, it will re-engage a younger generation in political decision making that needs a chance for a livable future.

### **Enhance the UN International Criminal Court**

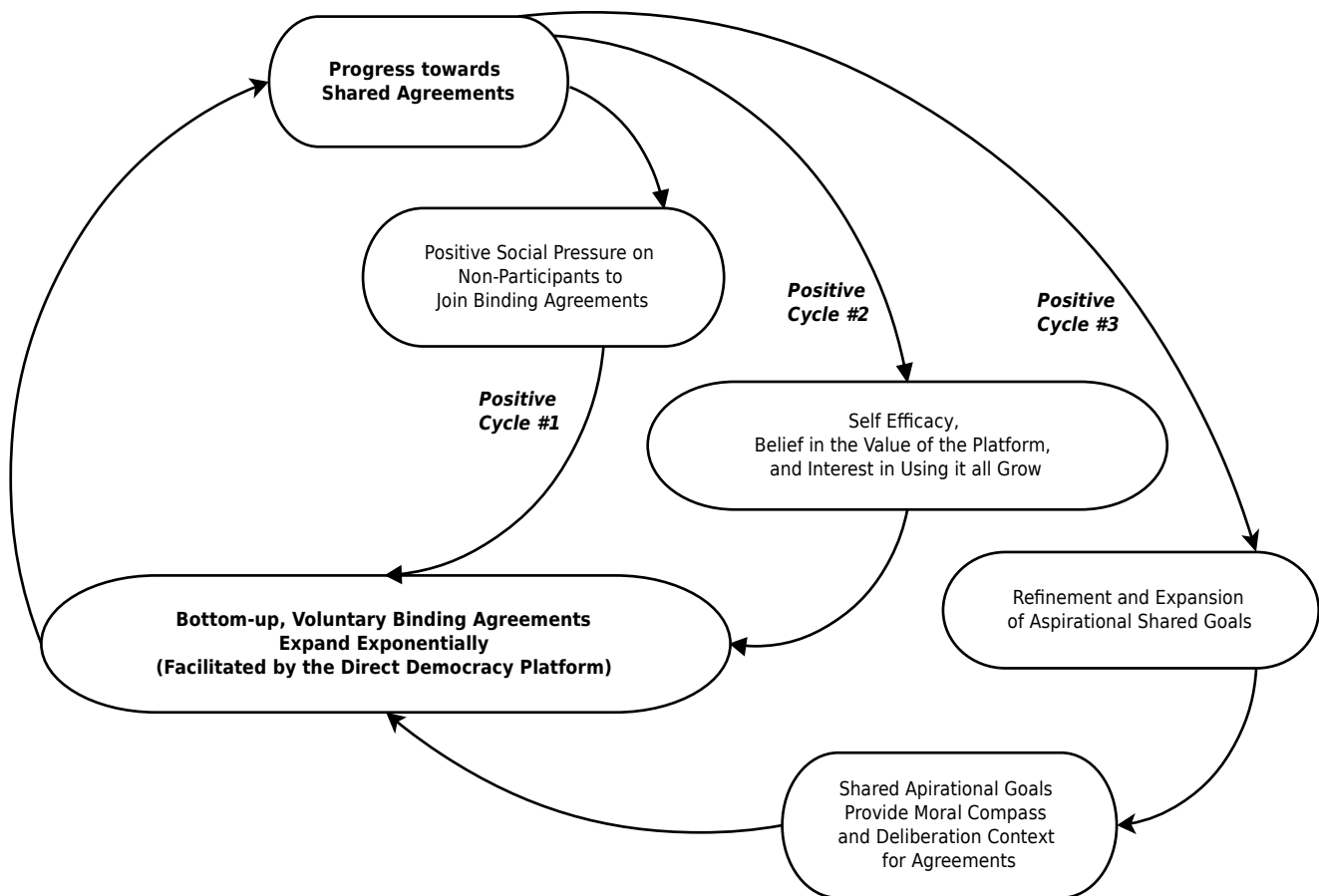
The dissolution of the UN Security Council paves the way for international prosecution and enforcement:

We suggest to **increase financing and staffing of the International Criminal Court in Den Haag to prosecute corporations and governments** that commit crimes against humanity and nature.

Reparations from such court decisions will provide finances to the harmed populations and will discourage corporations to engage in irresponsible practices.

Once the Security Council is no longer in the way of hearing such cases and prosecuting the perpetrators, corporations' global power will be broken by this finally effective world government structure.

**5. Full integration of all measures mentioned above into a ratcheting mechanism to reach binding agreements towards goals**



**Aspirational goals combined with expanding voluntary, binding agreements create a triple-ratcheting mechanism, moving us increasingly closer to our aspirations**

The 2GATHER platform creates at least **three positively reinforcing cycles** that result in exponentially expanding bottom-up, yet still voluntary, binding agreements that are in alignment with the highest aspirations of humanity.

The 2Gather platform enables groups of individuals to enter into **voluntary, binding agreements** with each other. For example, people may pledge to refrain from the use of violence, coercion or misrepresentation so that they can develop greater trust and reduce transaction costs with each other. They can ask their representatives to make the same pledges.

**1) Positive Cycle #1:** The platform makes it possible to determine who has entered into particular agreements and who has not. This **creates positive pressure on elected officials or relevant corporations, to join certain binding agreements** that citizen groups value (e.g. anti-corruption pledges, upholding human or environmental rights).

Such binding agreements thus provide accountability of representatives to their constituency, and mutual accountability between global citizens to follow through on their pledges to enforce agreements, for example with their votes or sanctions.

**2) Positive Cycle #2:** As these voluntary agreements achieve beneficial results for participants, **self-efficacy of the participants grows** as does their belief in the value and potential of the 2Gather platform, as well as their reliance on it.

**3) Positive Cycle #3:** As beneficial results are achieved, **aspirational goals are expanded and refined through deliberation, decision-making and agreements**, resulting in a sustainable positive pull towards our highest values.

When these positively reinforcing cycles are taken together, the possibility of intentionally creating and adapting new voluntary “cultures” of civic, pro-global values and behavior become possible across geographic and demographic divides.

### **3. Argumentation demonstrating how the model meets the assessment criteria**

#### **1. Core Values**

Our proposed direct democracy platform 2GATHER enshrines the **equal value and equal voice of every person** on the planet.

#### **In summary, this model:**

- \* establishes the equal voice and decisions of real, natural persons, unmediated by any representatives, as the ultimate source of decision-making power on the planet.
- \* ensures access and usability for all humans of voting age, regardless of location, wealth, education, disability, etc.
- \* seeks to identify the “common good” as defined by the global majority and makes those values the guiding compass for 2GATHER

Our model is specifically designed to **end the current over-representation of wealthy, population-poor nations over poorer, population-rich countries** and works to level the playing field.

Its new Global Human Right Declaration establishes the equal value of EVERY human life, therefore arranging for equal voting rights through the **first direct democracy tool in human history**.

It also strives to reform established representational bodies like the UN to provide **equal representation** which has been refused by the current colonial-minded representational system.

#### **Core Values include not just Human Life**

The equal value of all human life logically necessitates the idea to re-establish “**the shared commons**” as our natural wealth. The over-exploitation of natural resources is a direct result of the privatization of the commons.

For the first time in modern history, Bolivia has **granted all nature equal rights to humans**, including rights to life for forests, rivers and animals that protect their “personhood” from commercial exploitation(20). **These laws will inspire radically new environmental and conservation practices.**

With the help of 2GATHER, decisions that limit corporate power and break up non-compliant entities to manageable size might be envisioned by global vote and referendum.

In order to calculate the real price of corporate success, new budgets including “externalities” might even suggest socialization of corporate property or capital to compensate for decades of damages.

Once put to the vote through 2GATHER, agreements on basic human and animal rights might surface that will necessitate a change in agriculture and animal husbandry.

## **2. Decision-making capacity**

Our model inherently **limits veto powers by any representatives or special interests** through the ever-present power of the **global popular referendum**.

Representatives will be confronted with the people’s direct will through enforceable agreements in the blockchain and if non-compliant may be removed from office through referendum.

As the blockchain technology allows for **affordable, swift global referendums**, decision-making will occur without delays through the current representative system.

As special-interest groups will no longer have access to the randomly selected, geographically decentralized and ever-changing deliberation panels, urgent issues like global warming that have been blocked and downplayed by big business will finally be addressed.

Once the people’s will has been established through polling and value-based commitments via 2GATHER and the political representatives do not act accordingly, citizens may form **self-financed non-profit groups to implement their wishes**. Donations to these actions raised by **crowd-funding could be tax-deductible**, resulting in less funds to a non-responsive government.

## **3. Effectiveness**

Our global direct democracy platform can **address global challenges and risks efficiently and enforceably**.

The true will of the global population can be quickly surfaced through global polling via the 2GATHER platform as well as through more **in-depth deliberation groups**, free of manipulation by special interests.

Platform users can form agreements with each other to advance certain global goals starting small and growing organically to a sufficient scale to address the problem with exponential speed through social networking.

These groups can use **incentives** (e.g. binding promises of support and resources) or **sanctions to gain compliance from their representatives**, remove them or take action directly (e.g. conservation campaigns, mobilizations to provide aid), as necessary.

In the immediate future, while the 2GATHER platform is being built, **global polling followed by a referendum can effectively confront the current representative system on national and UN level** with the actual will of the people.

The proposed changes to the UN (through global referendum) should create either a reformed UN that is able to make decisions with two thirds majorities in the reformed General Assembly – or will lead to a withdrawal of the UN's mandate as the global people's representational body.

In this case, a new global body (without the U.S. at its center) will have to be established that can handle the current global challenges.

The already established **UN International Court and the UN Peacekeeping and Police force** of close to 100.000 personnel (or an equivalent) can then be used to enforce decisions of the UN General Assembly or the alternative global body.

**Once the 2GATHER platform is fully implemented, less and less importance will fall to the representational governance bodies since the voice of humanity via direct democracy must always override the voices of their representatives.**

### **Example: How to slow global warming/hold decision makers accountable using the 2GATHER model**

The various steps suggested in our model work hand-in-hand:

\* Once global warming has been established as a globally perceived threat via global referendum, deliberation groups on the platform discuss the issue and come up with an **action plan** to reduce greenhouse gases and hold accountable the main culprits causing climate instability.

\* Through dissemination of the poll results on the platform that demonstrate broad support, a **mandate for action develops**.

\* **Citizens develop binding agreements** with each other to uphold and advance the mandate, including applying incentives and sanctions on their elected representatives or corporations.

\* Cases of pollution and environmental damage will be discussed within the **reformed UN General Assembly** and referred to the **International Criminal Court** in Den Haag for

prosecution. If the process stalls, the 2GATHER users could apply pressure via **global referendum** or enforcement of the blockchain agreements.

\* Non-compliant, polluting companies may have to be shut down by **temporary order through the UN International Court**. This speedy process could be used to tackle issues like the global pollution in the Fukushima nuclear disaster.

\* If necessary, a **global police force** (e.g. UN Peacekeeping force) and later **observers** would be deployed to ensure compliance, under the authority of the UN or a global referendum mandate.

#### **4. Resources and Financing**

**Sufficient initial funding can be provided through a combination of foundation grants, grants from governments that express early interest, as well as crowd-funding from individual global citizens.**

Similar financing schemes have proven successful in financing social experiments in the past. For example, most of the pilot studies to experiment with a Guaranteed Minimum Income (GMI) have been crowd-funded by small amounts of \$5-\$10 through private initiatives like “Mein Grundeinkommen” in Germany.

Within a time window of five years, the general acceptance of the GMI in Germany has shifted from 21% in 2012 to 63% in 2017 (21).

**Once a tipping point of broad-based use and demonstrable results has been reached, national governments might invest into the platform as into infrastructure (“Information highway”) projects.**

**Ultimately, small fractions of every financial transaction that flows through the system will be deducted to finance development and maintenance as a kind of user tax.**

**The human resources required in our proposal are primarily software developers and designers, social scientists and experts in pedagogy, project managers, marketers and translators.**

**In addition, a wide array of experts will be called upon as needed in the deliberation groups.** Startup financing will be required to fund their work. Thankfully, such an inspiring and far-reaching project will naturally attract strong talent.

In addition, just like all large social media platforms rely heavily on their voluntary contributors, there are **likely to be many volunteers from the users of the platforms themselves: they are co-designers and co-creators as well.**

## **Example:How cryptocurrencies can end corruption and help create a new, transparent economy**

In its total implementation, our model suggests a **general monetary reform**, perhaps eliminating the necessity for banks entirely, which will gradually and naturally emerge **as a result of cryptocurrency usage**. Far reaching economical and political implications are currently feared by the established elites.

The dominance of the US dollar as a reserve currency and the main unit of international trade and finance is ending. China has just offered to convert oil to Yuan to gold on the Shanghai Gold Exchange. The race for currency dominance is on.

To prevent any national currency from achieving another monopoly, **we suggest the introduction of a neutral cryptocurrency**, regulated by a global institution like the reformed UN.

The increasingly wider acceptance of a blockchain-based currency will create a written, indestructible record of every transaction and thereby **can end purely speculative or illegal money-trading, bribing and laundering**.

Once our **financial systems become transparent**, human and drug trafficking as well as illegal arms dealing and many other sources of violence and instability around the world will be easier to prosecute and will steadily decline.

## **5. Trust and Insight**

The proposed platform provides a tremendous amount of **transparency, trust and insight while protecting privacy** as described in the model section. In particular, the following features ensure a trustworthy process:

- 1) The underlying blockchain supporting the platform ensures **all records are preserved indefinitely and auditable** as needed.
- 2) When binding agreements are entered into, **corresponding monitoring agents** can be installed with appropriately limited access to each participant's private data. These agents alert the broader community when agreement breaches are detected.
- 3) There are **formal and informal benefits** that accrue when a user demonstrates **participation in binding, values-based agreements**.

This creates **incentives** to enter into such agreements and to voluntarily publicize one's participation.

It is very likely that **elected representatives, institutions, governments, and public companies** will all come under strong positive pressure to **enter into binding disclosure**



**and behavior agreements** (e.g. anti-corruption, abuse of power and conflicts of interest) that can then be enforced through the platform.

## **6. Flexibility**

The 2GATHER platform is extremely flexible, with continuous improvement and adaptation built into the model. Because adoption is voluntary at its core and the technology is new, expectations for experimentation and frequent revisions can be established.

The core value of the platform lies in its ability to support direct democracy and its organic, evolving nature. The system develops alongside the identified core values as expressed in the ongoing global polls.

**Specifically, the platform has flexibility along the following dimensions:**

### **\* Iterative User Testing, Continuous Improvement and Experimentation:**

By design, the platform development process will proceed with frequent user satisfaction assessments and iterative refinement to better meet the needs and desires of users.

Experiments can be run across user demographics to compare different implementations to see which is more effective. The best approaches will bubble up and be implemented.

### **\* Open Source:**

The underlying software that powers the platform is visible to anyone and everyone. Improvements, feature requests, bug fixes, and suggested extensions can be submitted by anyone and managed through a transparent, democratically controlled process.

### **\* More Flexibility in Reformed UN bodies:**

Until full implementation of the 2GATHER platform, our model suggests a highly flexible mechanism via global polls and referendums to reform existing structures (like the UN).

Our main model for UN reform suggests the **end of veto powers over majority decisions** to move processes along and create an increasingly flexible, responsive governance body.

## **7. Protection against the Abuse of Power**

**Abuses of power, corruption and the failure of representative governance are rampant, continual problems throughout the globe. Even organizations with the explicit goal of serving the common good develop self-interests that compromise their intentions.**

**The increasing concentration of monetary and corporate power has undermined existing decision-making structures and rendered them impotent.**

The **fundamental flaw in representative democracies** has become increasingly clear. Worldwide, the fraud of “representatives” out for their own profits have caused tragedies to millions of humans and the environments as a whole.

The extent of depression and helplessness in today’s societies can be traced back to transferring our power to a chosen few who have totally abused it and can no longer be held accountable.

**Direct democracy engages, informs, empowers and energizes people.**

But even referendums can be **abused by powerful special interests**. In order to avoid such abuses of power, as witnessed in the Brexit campaign, **spending for pro and con campaigns must be regulated** and transparency of funding sources will be guaranteed through the block chain.

### **Inbuilt Safeguards of Privacy**

While transparency is a major goal of the platform, 2GATHER also takes seriously the need for **protections against intimidation and anti-democratic surveillance**. To that end, the **private data of private citizens is encrypted and protected**, disclosed only through their explicit consent to specific people or entities. This encryption is linked to their biometric data and so cannot be stolen.

### **Discourse: When does global interest override national interest?**

In rare cases, the interest of global survival overrides the interest of nation states (e.g. containing the Fukushima radiation).

In our model, the reformed UN General Assembly (or the 2GATHER platform, once operational) will generate a representative or direct vote to establish authority to openly call on the offending country to **comply with the global survival priority**.

As in all cases, **negotiations and deliberation always must be the first step**. But once a deadline has been passed, the world community must have the right to act to ensure its survival.

### **Perspective:**

Ours is a time of opportunity during which the United States, the largest world power that ever existed, has been substantially overextended and weakened. During this time, smaller players have stepped up and formed new alliances.

Since **Eurasian** countries have already experienced catastrophic human loss and war within recent memory, these players **are much more likely to resort to diplomacy and peaceful resolutions than America**, who has initiated most of the armed conflicts of the past 70 years, always outside its own territory.

**We consider the world community as a family of continents:** Europe is the father, Africa the mother, Russia the grandfather, China the grandmother.

North-America appears to be the unruly teenage boy that has terrorized the family with his demanding wants and youthful instability. **It is time for the family to come together and put the teenage son into his place** to learn about his limits.

It is time for the boy to go through initiation and grow up. The 2GATHER platform makes these kind of non-violent shifts possible, while institutions like the current UN that have been captured by the US cannot.

### **8. Accountability**

The block chain technology, financial transparency and direct democracy-based input will **hold representatives accountable**. If necessary, they could be voted out with a referendum. Until full implementation of the 2GATHER platform, the reformed UN will hold conflicting countries accountable to keep the peace and use diplomacy.

**A new governance structure must put ultimate power in the hands of all global citizens** if we are to advance the good of all humankind through respect for the equal value of all human beings.

**Democracy is generally defined as governance by the people, more specifically governance in which the supreme power is vested in the people and exercised by them directly or indirectly as they choose.**

Although many people would identify democracy as a particular process established through a constitution of laws, it is fundamentally an **aspiration** to which we strive. It is a direction we are heading in, not a destination that has yet been reached.

A frequent distinction is made between direct democracy by the people at large and representative democracy in which representatives are elected and make decisions on behalf of their electorate.

**Representative democracy is fundamentally always a compromise made in the interests of expediency, and as such must be considered less democratic than direct democracy.**

A pragmatist might argue that our goal should be limited to improve the functioning of existing representative governance of global institutions like the United Nations. We cannot wholeheartedly support this approach, because in its core values it has already given up on true democracy and the equal rights of all human beings.

Elitists and other **pessimists about human nature** tend to assume that people are generally ignorant, lazy and incapable of making responsible decisions about their lives. **Such beliefs are antithetical to egalitarian values** and derail progress towards our democratic aspirations.

Education is certainly a necessary component, but **we can and must trust that people can govern themselves, even at a global scale.** 2GATHER shows how that can be achieved.

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