

What if we change

Let's fix this planet

Join the interactive documentary

www.whatifwechange.org

WhatIfWeChange.org is an interactive platform about what happens to people when they make their barren land fertile again. How does it affect a community when nearly extinct animals flourish again? What changes when people make their ecosystem a vibrant source of life again, for themselves and for generations to come? And this story is about you too.

Reporters working for you

Because we want you to write the script and **direct our video reporters** located around the world. They are your eyes and ears. They give insight into the daily life and work of people improving their lives by conserving our planet. We aim for dialogue in all corners of the world. We invite you to share your perspective and contribute your opinion. Direct the reporters, ask questions and co-create with them.

Together, we can change the script

Through WhatIfWeChange.org we shape our future by telling video stories. Stories about the importance of nature for human survival. Stories from people living and working all over the world, conserving our planet and improving their lives. You can watch these stories, share them and create your own stories.

Need inspiration?

Do you think this is all a dream? Watch [this story](#) made by our reporter John D. Liu. It might change your scope on the creative power of people...

Made possible by

What if we change is an innovative partnership between conservationists and media makers. *What if we change* is an initiative of IUCN NL, in partnership with environmental filmmaker John D. Liu, IUCN ambassador for Ecosystem Restoration, conservation organizations Wetlands International, the Dutch Caribbean Nature Alliance, the Wildlife Trust of India, Fundación Natura in Bolivia and a team of dedicated Dutch mediamakers, The Loefflab Foundation.

What if we change is made possible by the generous support of the Dutch Postcode Lottery.



About IUCN NL

How do we balance the needs of people with the needs of the planet that supports us?

Nature, directly or indirectly, provides our clean air, food, water, shelter, energy, soil, medicines and protection from natural disasters, as well as recreation, inspiration, diversity and beauty.

But for social and economic development, we must continue to reduce poverty and improve people's lives and this has a great bearing on nature.

For more than 60 years, IUCN, the *International Union for Conservation of Nature* helps the world find pragmatic solutions to our most pressing environment and development challenges. IUCN supports scientific research and field projects all over the world and brings governments, NGOs, scientists, companies and local communities together to develop and implement policy, laws and best practice.

Our vision is a just world that values and conserves nature.

Our mission is to influence, encourage and assist societies throughout the world to conserve the integrity and diversity of nature and to ensure that any use of natural resources is equitable and ecologically sustainable.

IUCN is the world's oldest and largest global environmental network - a democratic membership union with more than 1100 government and NGO member organizations, and almost 11,000 volunteer scientists in more than 160 countries.

IUCN's work is supported by more than 1,000 professional staff in 60 offices and hundreds of partners in public, NGO and private sectors around the world.

As the IUCN National Committee of the Netherlands, IUCN NL focuses on the importance of ecosystems for human well-being worldwide from a Dutch perspective.

For more information, visit www.iucn.org or www.iucn.nl .

Our partners

Dutch Postcode Lottery

What if we change is made possible by the generous support of the Dutch Postcode Lottery.

In 2010 IUCN NL and the Dutch Caribbean Nature Alliance received an extra lottery grant of € 2.9 million. The Dutch Postcode Lottery is proud to have been able to award this extra project which aims to show that recovery of complex ecosystems in Mali, Bonaire, India and Bolivia is possible and leads to better lives of people all around the world.

IUCN NL thanks the Dutch Postcode Lottery and its 2.4 million participants for making our work possible. With their help we can restore the planet for humankind.

In 2011 the Dutch Postcode Lottery supported 83 charity organizations with a record sum of € 270 million. For more information about our partnership, visit the IUCN NL website at www.iucn.nl.



Loefflab Foundation

The Loefflab Foundation was founded in 2010 to design the *What if we change* concept together with IUCN NL. It is a group of four dedicated communication and media professionals: Ralf Verbeek (filmmaker/editor), Jhein Lohman (project manager and concept design), Cas Slagboom (interaction designer) and Nathalie Nijkamp (producer/communicator). They all run their own companies and work together on occasion for both the profit and non-profit sector.

For more information, visit www.ralffilm.nl, www.mind4media.nl and www.motionworks.nl.



John D. Liu, environmental filmmaker

'For 15 years, in the 1980's and early 1990's, I worked as a television journalist in China, for CBS News, Radiotelevisione Italiana (RAI), Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen (ZDF German Television) and others. Over the years I had to do virtually every job in remote television production and gained some skills that were in demand. However, the further along the corporate television route I went, the less I liked what I was doing. The work was technically and artistically challenging but the subject matter I was asked to report on, was often not what I would have chosen or what I thought was important'.

'As I was growing in my work I was also observing as China emerged from isolation and poverty. It was exhilarating to see as China stood up but it was terrifying to consider the pollution and environmental implications of its rise. I would go to my office and think, "someone should really do something about the environment", but what I meant was "someone else". After some time I began to feel that my own attitude was part of the problem. If I was unwilling to change my life, why would anyone else? At this point I decided to found the *Environmental Education Media Project for China* (EEMPC) and to devote my energies to understanding and communicating about the environment and ecology. Since the mid-1990's, the EEMPC has distributed hundreds of existing films in China and I have made dozens of environmental and ecological films in China and around the world'.

'Now as I approach my 60's I see that there are certain moments in life when it is necessary to choose a path and that this determines ones fate. This was true when I chose to go to China in 1979 and this was also true when I decided to leave television journalism and become an environmental filmmaker. Now because of these decisions I can look back on a body of work that is extensive in range, has helped me to learn much more about life and earth systems and that is increasing in influence. The work will never end, but hopefully my efforts will benefit humanity and the Earth. It began by making a decision to try'.

John Dennis Liu has been studying and filming integral poverty reduction and large-scale ecosystem restoration projects since his first visit to China's Löss Plateau in 1995. For over ten years, he has been documenting this project on video and to this end has set up the Environmental Education Media Project.

John has written, directed and produced numerous nature documentaries for, among others, the BBC and National Geographic, including 'A Steppe Ahead', 'Line in the Sand', 'Because they're worth it', 'Jane Goodall - China Diary' and 'Lessons of the Löss Plateau'.

Via his campaign *Earth's Hope*, he aims to draw the world's attention to the importance of ecosystem restoration and how it can contribute to the health of humanity and nature and help counter climate change. John lives and works in Beijing, China. For more information, visit www.earthshope.org or <http://eempc.org>.



Dutch Caribbean Nature Alliance

The Dutch Caribbean Nature Alliance (DCNA) is a regional network of protected areas and grassroots organisations that was founded in 2005 with the help of IUCN NL and the Dutch Postcode Lottery, to assist the park authorities of the ten protected areas in the Dutch Caribbean in the management of the parks.

DCNA works together with the park authorities and local and international partners to maintain the island's impressive biological diversity and to promote the sustainable management of natural resources.

In 2010 DCNA, in cooperation with STINAPA, the Bonaire National Marine Park and local fishermen, started a restoration project in Lac Bay, Bonaire to restore the queen conch population and regulate sustainable conch fishery in Lac. Our reporter Merel Notten documents the project and its people in her video diary and blog. She can also bring you in touch with fishermen and islanders to share your voice and ideas.

The Dutch Caribbean Nature Alliance is our partner in Lac Bay, Bonaire. For more information about DCNA, visit www.dcnanature.org or www.dcna.nl.



Wetlands International

Wetlands International is a global NGO that works to sustain and restore wetlands and their natural resources for the benefit of people and biodiversity. Wetlands International is supported by the membership of dozens of governments and NGOs across the world, works in over 100 countries and has 21 local offices spread across six continents. Its headquarters are located in Ede, the Netherlands.

The work of Wetlands International ranges from research and local field projects to advocacy and engagement with governments, the private sector and international forums and conventions. Wetlands International works through partnerships and is supported by contributions from an extensive specialist expert network and tens of thousands of volunteers.

Wetlands International is our partner in the Inner Niger Delta in Mali, West Africa. For more information, visit www.wetlands.org or <http://afrique.wetlands.org>.



Wildlife Trust of India

The Wildlife Trust of India (WTI) is committed to urgent action that works towards the protection of India's wildlife. Its mission is to conserve nature, especially endangered species and threatened habitats, in partnership with communities and governments.

One of the important and central states of northeast India is the state of Meghalaya. It is a remote area, a forgotten part of India. But also a symbol of hope. As the Wildlife Trust of India works together with local communities on the successful conservation of biodiversity and the forest habitat, amidst the unavoidable realities of poverty, underdevelopment and conflict of the region.

Committed to save the Indian Elephants from extinction, the Wildlife Trust of India is trying to save their critically threatened habitats. In return for setting aside land for elephants and other wildlife, the communities will get needs based support, through alternate livelihoods, eco-development, REDD and other forms of carbon financing and innovative community-based conservation.

Wildlife Trust of India is our partner in Meghalaya, India.
For more information visit www.wildlifetrustofindia.org



Fundación Natura Bolivia

Fundación Natura is a Bolivian NGO conserving critical ecosystems and improving the quality of life of the Bolivian people, through alternative and innovative mechanisms of conservation and sustainable development.

Their vision is that sustainable development is possible and viable. Fundación Natura Bolivia believes that human societies can develop in an equitable and just way, without destroying the resource base on which life depends.

Fundación Natura Bolivia explores connections between conservation and sustainable development, strengthens local and national environmental policies and promotes participation and social equity.

Fundación Natura Bolivia is our partner in the Amboró National Park, Bolivia.
For more information visit www.naturabolivia.org



Our projects

Mali



Imagine...

An enormous flood delta in central Mali, located on the edge of the Sahara: the Inner Niger Delta. Every year, this area is flooded as a result of the monsoon rains in the highlands of Guinea, the source of the Niger River. This has led to the development of a dynamic ecosystem that is of crucial importance to the survival of more than one million people and a large number of animal species, including 117 species of water bird, hippopotami, sea cows and crocodiles.

Every year, many hundreds of thousands of migratory birds are caught in the Inner Niger Delta and traded for consumption in local markets. A large share of these birds are endangered species of grassland birds from the Netherlands and other European countries. The hunting in the Delta takes place out of necessity; due to unsustainable land use and climate change, this three-million hectare large wetland has lost most of its riches in terms of fish and other natural resources. The survival of the local population is under serious pressure. In response to this, local fishermen have been forced to supplement their meagre income by hunting birds. In other words, the fate of many of our own birds is determined to a large extent by the inhabitants of the Inner Niger Delta and the dire situation they find themselves in.

To protect our Dutch storks, black-tailed godwits and ruffs, we are therefore also required to take action in Africa: by protecting and restoring the migration areas of

Dutch birds of passage in Mali, the people in Mali can once again be provided with alternate sources of income (such as fishing) and they will no longer be dependent on migratory birds for their daily sustenance.

At a number of locations in the Delta, we will therefore be working together with local farmers and fishermen to replant the mangrove forests and restore the vegetation in natural floodplains. The result of this will be that the area's resistance to climate change will increase, the farmers will once again be able to allow their cattle to graze here, and the fishermen will once again have something to catch. The birds themselves will also benefit from the recovery of these natural values.

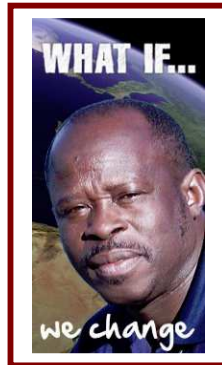
With the area returning to its original state, there will be less need for the local population to hunt. And in exchange for their participation in the natural recovery programme and the limiting of their hunting activities, the local population will be given access to microcredit, which they can use to set up, for instance, their own shop or agricultural company. This way, the underlying cause of the local nature degradation will be tackled at the source and people will get a chance to escape the spiral of poverty.

By supporting this project, the participants in the Dutch Postcode Lottery contribute to the sustainable economic development of thousands of inhabitants of the Inner Niger Delta. In exchange for this support, these inhabitants protect the Dutch grassland birds. This results in a fertile collaboration between people in the Netherlands and in Mali, which benefits both nature and human beings. At the same time, this project can serve as an example and a call on the Dutch government to not only focus on our own nature when it comes to protecting fauna, but to also invest in the underlying causes of the threat to migratory birds in other countries.

But *What if we change* does more besides. *What if we change* allows the audience of the Dutch Postcode Lottery in the Netherlands to share in this nature conservation project in Mali, so people can *see and experience* with their own eyes what the protection of nature involves and why this protection is important, both for people there and people here. *What if we change* makes use of modern media to establish direct contact between the participants of the Dutch Postcode Lottery and the people who, with the help of their financial assistance, will be replanting the mangrove forests in Mali, for a better life and to protect our grassland birds. For a period of two years, we will be able to follow the experiences and developments in the lives of these fishermen, hunters and farmers via films, stories and modern media technology. This way we can see with our own eyes what is happening in the field and observe how, thanks to our contribution, the situation of people and nature is improving both in Mali and in the Netherlands.

Our Malinese reporter in the Inner Niger Delta is Mamadou Mariko.

Wetlands International is our partner in the Inner Niger Delta in Mali, West Africa. For more information, visit www.wetlands.org or <http://afrique.wetlands.org>.



India

The wildlife conservation in many parts of Northeast India has been severely affected due to shrinkage, degradation and fragmentation of forest cover, caused by human activity like slash and burn cultivation, encroachment, poaching, mining for coal and limestone and an increasing human population.

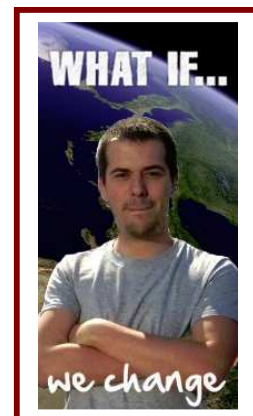
One of the important and central states of northeast India is the state of Meghalaya. It is a remote area, a forgotten part of India. But also a symbol of hope. As the Wildlife Trust of India works together with local communities on the successful conservation of biodiversity and the forest habitat, amidst the unavoidable realities of poverty, underdevelopment and conflict of the region.

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In Garo Hills fallow lands are restored and more land is reserved for wildlife conservation. People are made aware of the stakes and of how they benefit from this. In Karbi Anglong a wildlife corridor is restored through land acquisition.

Our reporter in Meghalaya is Paul Hendrix.

Wildlife Trust of India is our partner in Meghalaya, India. For more information visit www.wildlifetrustofindia.org



Bolivia

Below the rainforest in the Amboró National Park in Bolivia two communities try to resolve their differences over a shared water source. Business and conservation work hand in hand, as villagers downstream pay compensation to villagers upstream by cutting agriculture production and taking up beefarming.

But this isn't just a story about bees and water. It's about building confidence between communities traditionally distrustful of each other, so that they can all earn a living and the forest stays in tact.

Our reporter in Bolivia is Rodrigo Abascal.

Fundación Natura Bolivia is our partner in the Amboró National Park, Bolivia.
For more information visit www.naturabolivia.org



Bonaire

The Queen Conch, a sea snail, is a popular seafood throughout the Caribbean. Gross overfishing threatens the conch with extinction. This project is about working with local fisherman to restore the population and to work on sustainable conch fishery.

Fishermen are encouraged to participate in a moratorium on fishing for conch next to other conservation activities. Fishermen will benefit not only through payment for their services, but also because they can get permits allowing them to benefit in the future from sustainable conch fishery.

Our reporter in Bonaire is Merel Notten.

The Dutch Caribbean Nature Alliance is our partner in Lac Bay, Bonaire.
For more information about DCNA, visit www.dcnanature.org or www.dcna.nl.



John D. Liu

In Search of Sustainability

The documentary series '*In Search of Sustainability*' – to be followed on John's project channel on *What if we change* - contains drama on an epic scale. The series shows that the sustainability (and potentially the survival) of humanity will be determined by the functionality of our ecosystems. The success of John's earlier award winning film '*Hope in a Changing Climate*' shows that international audiences are interested in understanding the systems on which they depend for life. This is extremely important because many of these systems are seriously threatened and require broad agreement, collective policy and action to protect them where they are intact or restore them where they have been damaged.

'*Hope in a Changing Climate*' tells the story of John's quest over the last 15 years seeking to understand the basic functions of the Earth's Ecosystems and how human beings have altered them. The film shows specific inspirational stories in China, Ethiopia and Rwanda. Since John began research and documentation in China, Africa and around the world in 1995, the understanding of the potential of ecosystem restoration has emerged. This understanding shows that we can radically improve ecological function through understanding and through changing destructive human behavior.

Thorough documentation ensures that several principles of ecosystem health can be shown to be effective in conserving and restoring ecological function. Basic functions like the infiltration and retention of rainfall depend on the percentages of biomass and of organic matter in the soil. These are the functions that naturally regulate the hydrological cycle, the weather and the climate. These are also the requirements for natural nutrient recycling and the maintenance of microbiologic communities that in large part determine the healthy structure of living soils and productivity in human agriculture. A higher order of function also emerges through this work that shows the importance of biodiversity to ensuring the strength and resilience of ecosystems.

Ongoing episodes of '*In Search of Sustainability*' show how these principles apply in all parts of the world. In '***Rwanda – Forests of Hope***', we see a country that descended into genocide, seeking its redemption. Rwanda's commitment to nationwide restoration is seeking to heal both the land and the human spirit. In ***South Africa***, we see innovative collaboration between government, farmers, farm workers, academics and students to protect and restore unique biodiversity and a World Heritage Site by propagating indigenous and endemic plants. In ***Ecuador***, we learn about creative financing programs that provide communities and individuals with incentives to protect ecosystem function by valuing the function higher than short-term production. In ***Scotland***, we see how understanding of the role of forests has changed over centuries and how once barren hills are now functional forests.

In ***Hong Kong***, we see how scholars and activists are rethinking urban ecology. In subsequent programs we learn about specialized ecosystems and their health in India, Indonesia, Mali, Russia, Canada, USA, Europe and beyond.

***This is the knowledge needed to support a change
in human collective consciousness
that leads to a sustainable future for humanity and the Earth.
This vision suggests a pathway to sustainability
in which everyone on Earth has a role to play.***

Each episode of *'In Search of Sustainability'* is one step on a path that points toward our common future. The various profound elements from this series come together in *'Earth's Hope'*, a feature length film that will premier at the IUCN World Conservation Congress in Korea, September 2012. *'Earth's Hope'* represents an evolution in human consciousness that brings everyone to the level of systems thinking. The recognition that the atmosphere, the hydrological cycle, the oceans, the tremendous biodiversity on Earth are all interconnected and that human beings live in and are an integral part of this system. If we crash the system we will die and if we learn to live in harmony with natural systems we will survive.

'In Search of Sustainability' and *'Earth's Hope'* represent a personal journey for John D. Liu, who with his camera and his studies has pursued this vision for many years. The series and the film also represent global perspective that sees humanity as a species, and with each person, whether in Africa, Asia, the Americas, Europe or elsewhere on the Earth, as equally important and with a vital role to play.

In Search of Sustainability is written and directed by John D. Liu. We can follow John's quest for sustainability through his channel on *What if we change*.

For more information, visit www.earthshope.org or <http://eempc.org> or get in touch with him on *What if we change*.

www.whatifwechange.org

