

A PRESENTATION AT THE 13TH
ANNUAL R3.0 CONFERENCE 2026
BIOREGIONAL REGENERATION AS
COLLAPSE RESILIENCE



Animating place as an agent of system evolution.

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NALUBAAGA IS CONSTANTLY COMMUNICATING

**What she lacks is
not a voice. What she
lacks is attention.**

Her ecological capacity is blocked, not destroyed. What is closer to extinction is our capacity to listen to her and steward her together.

FROM FIXING PROBLEMS TO HARNESSING POTENTIAL

Our wetlands do not need our protection. They need a collaboration infrastructure to revitalise their ecosystem and livelihood potentials.

Seventy percent of Nalubaaga has been built over, and thirty more Kampala wetlands face the same. Enforcement can stop harm; it cannot create collective restoration.

→ **Civic and trust infrastructure** lets a neighbourhood decide together, with the wetland herself participating in the decision.

→ **Transition infrastructure** carries 530 acres from fragmented plots into one co-stewarded ecosystem.

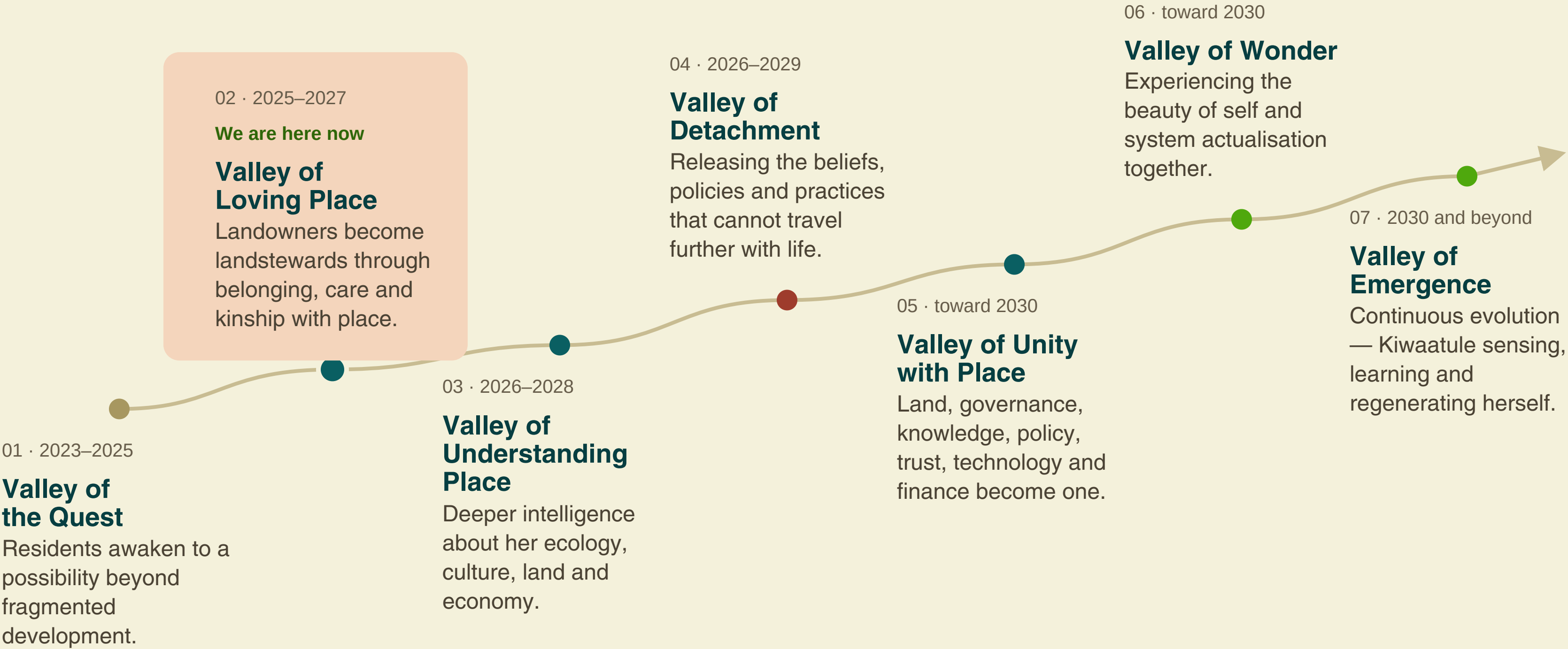
→ **Physical infrastructure** restores her ecosystem services and rebuilds the neighbourhood on a commons model.

→ **The first is what we have spent thirty months building, because nothing else holds without it.**

INTERIM STATES

Seven Valleys, from landowning to landstewarding

Each valley is an interim state creating the conditions for the next — and changing who we become as we walk through it. They overlap; they are not project phases.



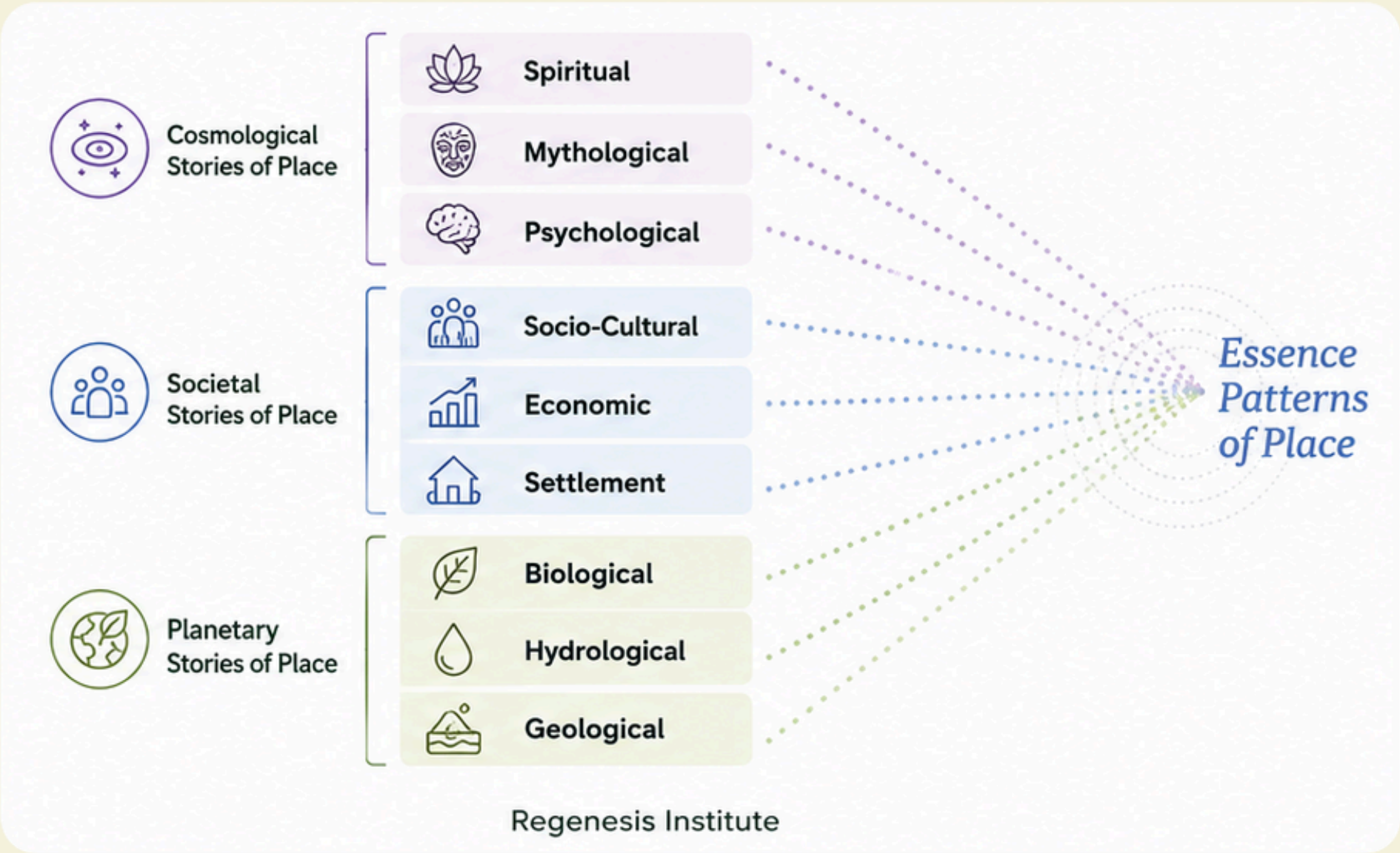


ACT I

Listening to place

Thirty months of walking, storying and convening, before a single intervention was designed.

Listening to place reveals what fragmented development cannot see.



Nine lines of enquiry, across three registers, converge on the essence patterns of a place.

- **A place is a living system:** A wetland, a neighbourhood, a livelihoods and a culture do not operate separately. They shape one another.
- **Listening to place changes what we see:** Instead of isolated problems, we begin to see the patterns linking land, water, waste, enterprise, governance and belonging.
- **Listening changes what we build:** So we stop designing disconnected projects and start building the infrastructure a living place needs to thrive.

NEIGHBOURHOOD KINSHIP DIALOGUES

**We invited ten neighbours,
expecting five. Eighteen came.**

*“Tweezuule — let us do a
collective self-discovery!”*



Everyone chose a fruit for a good day here, a fruit for a hard one, and a fruit for the life they dream of with all life in this place.

WHAT THE DIALOGUES TAUGHT US

People were not short of willingness. They were short of a space dream together.

“Right now we are like a snake shedding its skin. We remain a snake, but we have removed the dirt.”

→ The status quo persists because nobody is invited to dream collectively, so individual dreaming takes the day.

→ Individual dreaming asks what I can accumulate. Collective dreaming asks what this place could become.

→ Twenty-one neighbourhoods later, the same three things surfaced: memories of abundance, fear of waste and flooding, and a wish to act together.

→ **So we stopped designing projects and started building rooms.**

ONE QUESTION, ASKED OF FORTY LANDOWNERS

What is preventing this place from reaching its potential?

92%

of engaged 40 landowners
willing to re-common their
land, across 530 acres



→ There are also fears; neighbourhood fears; fear of the financial systems and fear of political system.

→ The barrier is not willingness. It is the absence of a framework and the trust to use it.

→ **“I am in a box, my neighbour is in a box, we are all in boxes with no breathing space.”**

Landowners nominated themselves, wrote their own bylaws, and gave the wetland a seat.

“Tusimbudde — we have set off.”

01

Nineteen landowners were elected by their peers to carry the process, balanced by age, gender and position in the landscape.

02

They wrote Ubuntu-informed bylaws and registered the Nalubaaga Valley Community as a cooperative.

03

One decimal of land equals one share, so governance weight comes from rootedness rather than wealth.

04

Nalubaaga became a member holding 4,600 decimals — the largest single stake in decisions about her.

05

A Council of Future Generations, aged ten to seventeen, was seated with standing of its own.

06

Individual title is protected throughout. Nobody signs their name off a title to take part.

Residents listened to Nalubaaga with their feet, hands and eyes.



Three hundred acres walked, seven sacred springs named, and people saw that waste, water, safety and livelihoods are one system. Some stopped dumping in the stream that week. Nobody enforced it.

"I used to dump waste in the stream, but now I have stopped — I've seen where it goes."

A group of men are sitting in a circle outdoors, holding a string taut between them. They are in a courtyard area with a brick building and laundry hanging in the background. The scene is dimly lit, suggesting dusk or dawn. The men are dressed in casual clothing, and some are wearing hats. The string they are holding is a light color, possibly white or yellow. The background shows a brick building with a corrugated metal roof and a window with bars. Laundry, including a red shirt and a purple cloth, is hanging on a line. The overall atmosphere is one of a community gathering or a shared activity.

ACT II

What emerged from the listening

Nothing here was designed in advance. Each part surfaced from the place, and then called the next part into being.

FIRST: A HIGHER CALLING

The listening asked for a discipline we did not have: relational design.

Not design that delivers products or projects to a place, but design that gathers neighbourhoods around three questions: What could a richer relation between x and y in our place look like? Who are the parties to this relation, and how do we include them in ko-designing its healing? How do we measure the health of this relation and those cascading from its healing?

A relation is the smallest whole that can be healed, and the largest whole a neighbourhood can hold at once.

- Life is relational. The question the place put to us was whether our economy could become relational too.
- So we organise around relations rather than projects: residents and waste, residents and Nalubaaga, youth and purpose, small businesses and capital.
- Success is not output. It is Gross Relational Potential — the vitality, viability and capacity to evolve of the whole bioregion.
- **Relational design is what turned thirty months of listening into something a neighbourhood can practise every month.**

SECOND: THE CULTURAL COMMONS

The listening kept returning us to five cultural commons.

They were not designed. They were remembered, in proverbs, in totems, in stories, drum beats, in naming, and in what people still do without knowing why.

- **Obuntu — the state of being through right relations**

I am because we are. Wellbeing arises through everyone participating in right relation with the wider web of life.

- **Obutaka — belonging that calls us to care**

Land-sourced belonging gives people agency and responsibility to care for all life in place — responding to what your place is calling you toward.

- **Emiziuro — what makes life our responsibility across generations**

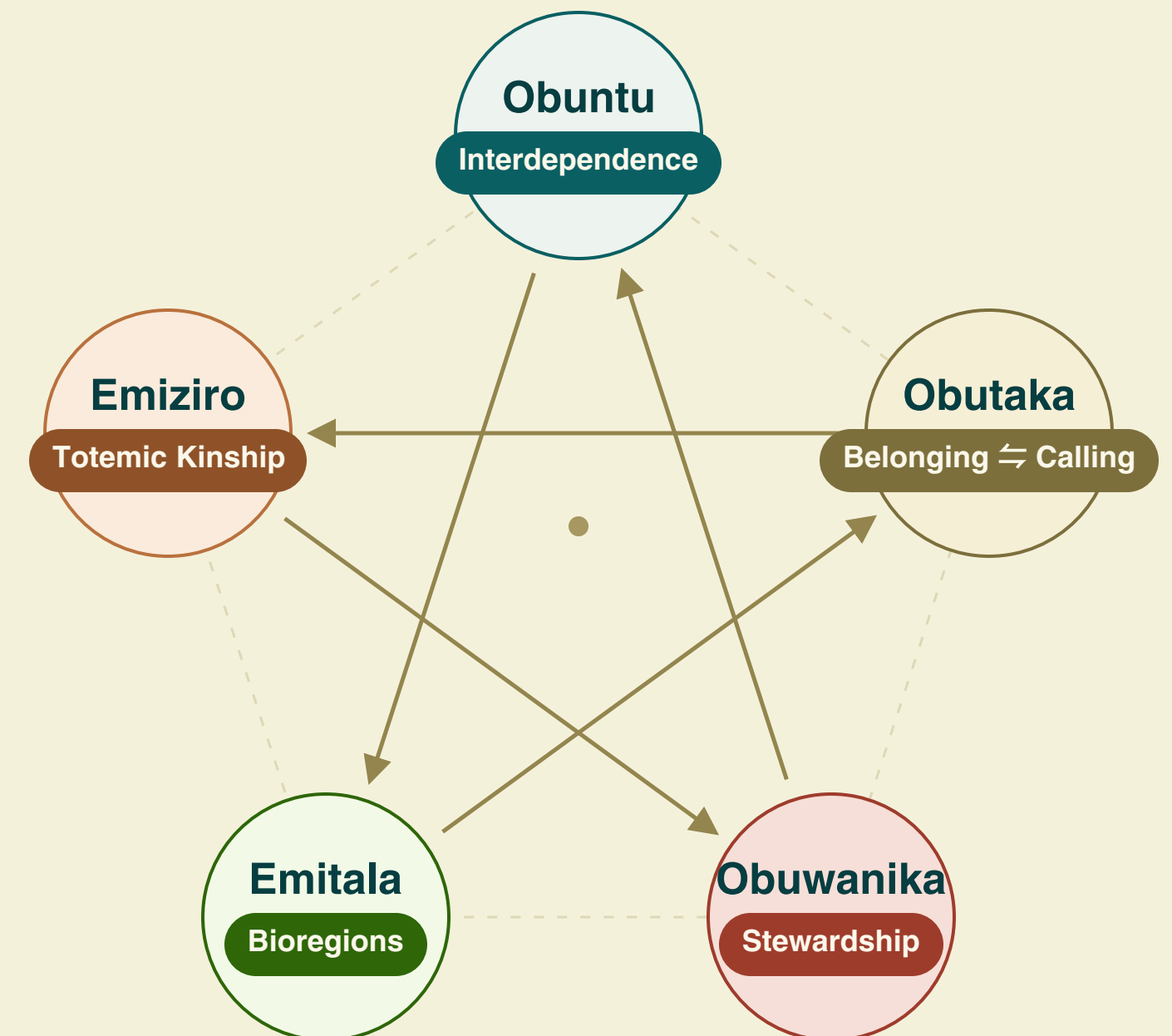
Totems carry a people's history, essence and future potential, binding it to other living beings — turning belonging into shared responsibility for habitats.

- **Emitala — seeing the whole place**

Knowing the wider natural boundaries you belong to, so decisions consider the whole rather than isolated parts.

- **Obuwanika — stewarding what sustains the whole**

Organising resources, responsibility and collective care so the commons can remain alive across generations.



Colonial land tenure fragmented Emitala into plots, and everything nested inside it went quiet with it. Reconstituting these five is how we rebuilt a way of deciding together.

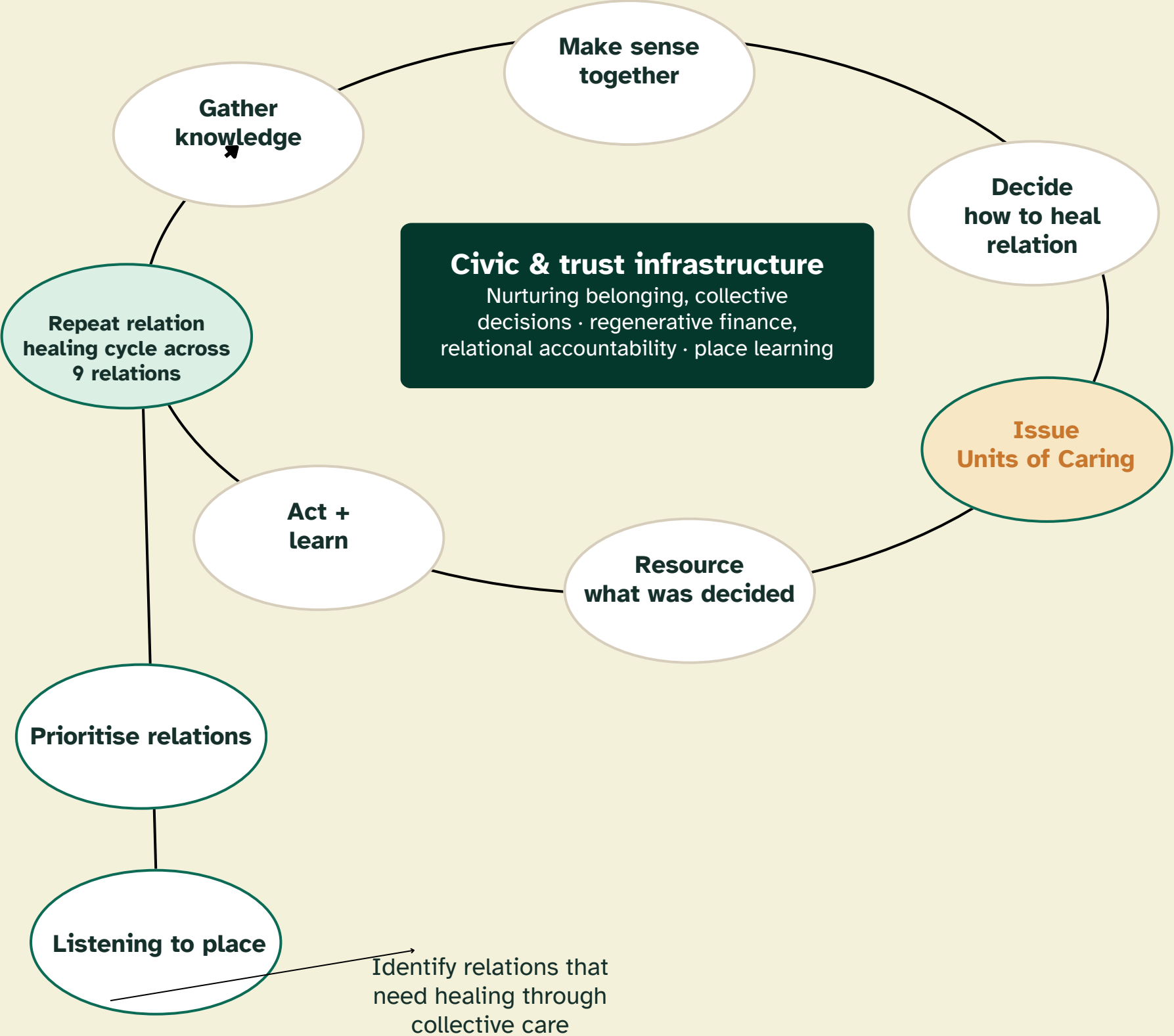
THIRD: RECONSTITUTED INTO A PROCESS

The five commons were reconstituted into the Obutaka Gathering Cycle.

The cycle was not imported. Obuntu, Obutaka, Emiziro, Emitala and Obuwanika are what give it its steps.

- 01 Listening to place surfaces the relations that need healing.
- 02 The gathering binds Obutaka to decide what the place is asking for first.

Each turn leaves the neighbourhood more capable of the next turn. The capability is what remains.



OBUNTU RELATIONAL DESIGN

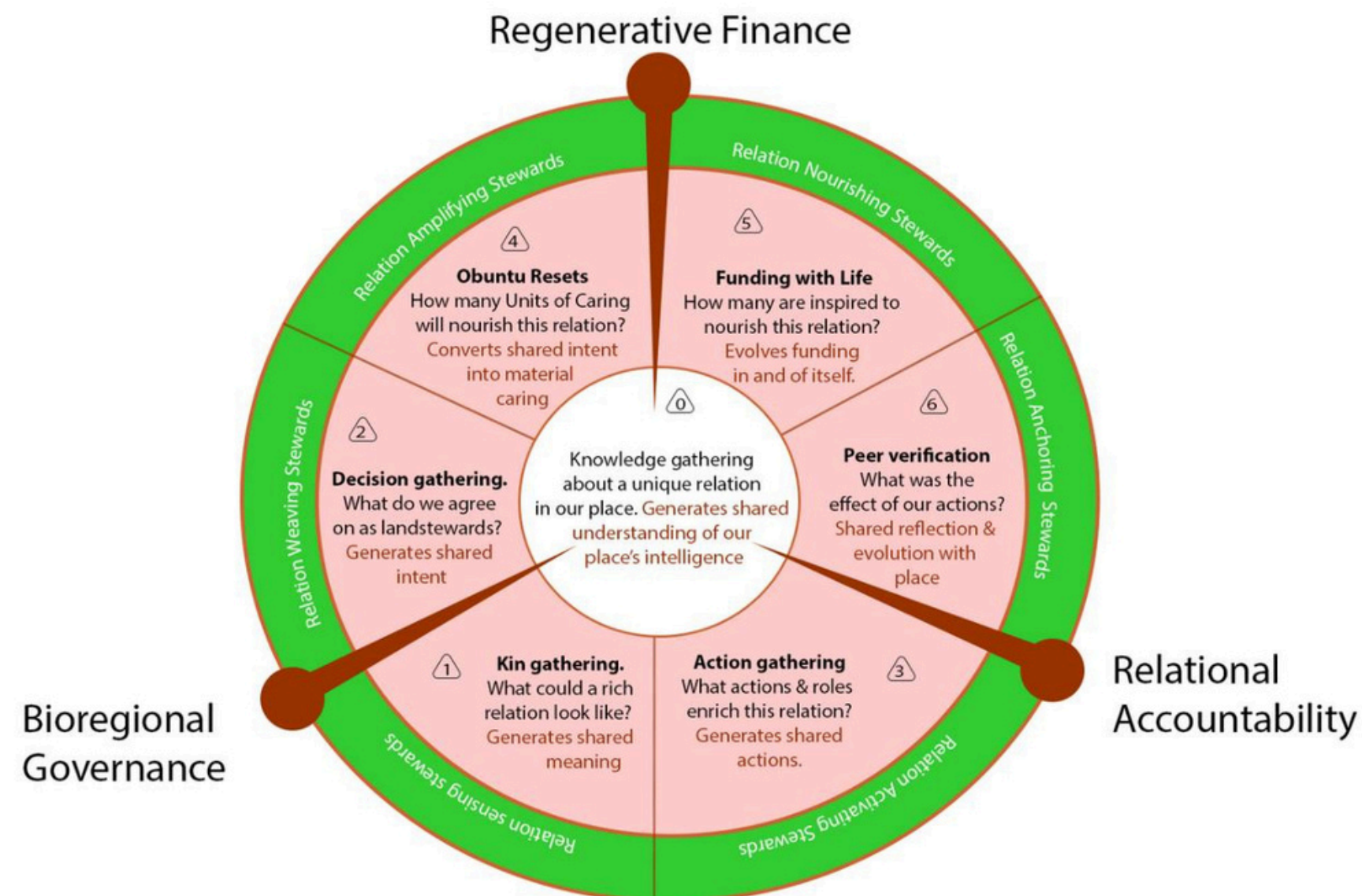
Four capabilities, one living cycle

Bioregional governance, regenerative finance, relational accountability and place learning are not four programmes. They are the four movements a place makes each time it heals one relation.

Each turn of the wheel leaves the neighbourhood more capable of the next turn — and the capability, not the project, is what remains.

OBUNTU RELATIONAL DESIGN:

Six Value-Adding Roles to restore the web of life through a gathering cycle that activates an energy-field for ongoing place stewarding.



Both insights point the same way: change the relation, and the system follows.

01 SPHERES OF INFLUENCE

“We cannot evolve our relation with life on earth without evolving our relation with land, and we cannot evolve our relation with land without evolving our relation with money — and evolution cannot happen without learning by doing.”

-
- **Finance** holds governance.
 - **Governance** holds land.
 - **Land** is where life is either fragmented or held in common.

02 WHAT OBUNTU TAUGHT US ABOUT CLIMATE

The climate crisis is not only about carbon emissions. It is about relations we once held with respect and care, and have since dropped.

- Between humans and nature.
- Between communities and their ecosystems.
- Between our economic systems and the living world.

So the regenerative imperative is not to capture more carbon. It is to restore these relations, one at a time.

Four conditions are emerging in Kiwaatule.

01

A higher calling

A shared responsibility to heal the relations that hold life together in our place.

02

A way to decide together

The Obutaka Gathering Cycle: shared knowledge, shared meaning, shared intent, shared action.

03

A practice of caring for place

Nine relations, not projects, through which the community restores life one decision at a time.

04 A funding architecture that can listen

This is why we are inviting funders to build a life-sourced architecture in which, rather than imposing, money can meet the intelligence, commitment and care already emerging from the place.

PRACTISING WHAT EMERGED · THE FIRST OBUTAKA
GATHERING, 6 APRIL 2026

For the first time, a wetland participated as a decision-maker.

Twenty-seven landstewards, and Nalubaaga
through three Attuners, bound their Obutaka
to nine relations that need healing.

**This is culture re-invented as
governance: people gather around
relations, not projects.**



NINE RELATIONS, PRIORITISED BY THE OBUTAKA BOUND TO THEM

The neighbourhood chose the relation it touches with its own hands every morning.

Obutaka is a land-sourced response, not a vote. We use quadratic decision making enabling people to express how strongly they care for a choice — so not even the wetland's 4,600 decimals can decide alone.

Governance became monthly practice instead of a five-year political contest.

Residents ⇌ Waste	64.05
Small Businesses ⇌ Capital	53.29
Residents ⇌ Cooking Energy	48.81
Residents ⇌ Nalubaaga Wetland	48.34
Youth ⇌ Purpose ⇌ Income	45.74
Residents ⇌ Food ⇌ Soil	42.37
Residents ⇌ Safety	41.76
Residents & Youth ⇌ Product Innovation	39.54
Residents ⇌ Cultural Identity & Ekyoto	34.88



ACT III

Practising what emerged

Healing the Residents $\Leftrightarrow$ Waste relation — the one this neighbourhood chose to start with, now moving through the whole cycle.

Eight streams grow one capability: seeing a flow where we used to see a heap.

Each stream answers a field this place named while we listened.

01

Attuning to Nalubaaga
Her own experience of the relation.

02

Modern knowledge
The state, recyclers and markets we cannot replace.

03

Indigenous knowledge
How this place once held its materials.

04

Comparable places
What makes a material system endure.

05

Household conversations
101 kitchens, and what already works.

06

Constituency letters
What part only you can carry.

07

Future generations
Standing for those who inherit it.

08

Bulungi Bwansi as listening
The whole metabolism, done with our hands.

If people enter the Kin Gathering still seeing a heap, they will design a better collection system. If they have learned to see a flow, an economy becomes imaginable.

STREAM 1 · ATTUNING TO NALUBAAGA

**Six Attuners walked her
for three days and carried
her experience into
every gathering since.**

She is not absent from the decision, and she does not need a proxy. What has been missing is our attention.

“I am your mother, not your drain. My potential is to carry, filter, cool, feed and heal this valley.”

“I return the relation you bring to me. Care with care; rubbish with floods and disease.”

“Reeds through concrete should tell you my regenerative potential is suppressed, not gone.”

“I am not asking you to save me. I am asking you to let me care for you again. Like a mother.”

HOUSEHOLD MATERIAL CONVERSATIONS

Two in five households already close the loop, unfunded and uninstructed.

So we begin with them, not with persuasion.



69% of what leaves a kitchen here is organic



40% already return peelings to gardens or animals



90% support a community-led waste committee

DECISION GATHERING

This is where a bioregional community stops being consulted and starts shaping life on its own terms.

Nothing above this stage binds anyone. Everything below it does -- it's a community commitment and invitation to transformation.

- Landstewards, the Attuners and the Council of Future Generations bind Obutaka to specific costed actions.
- Every action is broken into Units of Caring, so it can be met by many hands rather than one funder.
- The dissent is published alongside the decision, because a decision without its tensions is not trustworthy.
- **Three compost hubs, sorting kits for 500 households, and recognition for the 24 collectors already carrying our waste.**



Residents ⇌ Waste

Nalubaaga Valley Community, Kiwaatule · issued by the Decision Gathering, 27 landstewards

1 Unit of Caring = \$7.07

ENRICHING RELATION: RESIDENTS ⇌ WASTE

Neighbourhood Eggwatiro

Three compost hubs, one per zone

Residents were clear that a compost site must be within walking distance. Three landstewards have offered plots.

UNITS NEEDED	RESOURCED	REACHES
651 \$4,603	163 25% funded	500 households · 3 zones

488 Units of Caring still needed

- Invest Units of Caring
- Offer in kind

▸ The Nalubaaga wetland stewarded this priority

ENRICHING RELATION: RESIDENTS ⇌ WASTE

Sorting Starter Kits

Colour-coded bins and sacks for 500 homes

Free bins were the second thing households asked for. 38% never separate, most often because there is nowhere in the home to put it.

UNITS NEEDED	RESOURCED	REACHES
424 \$2,998	297 70% funded	500 households

127 Units of Caring still needed

- Invest Units of Caring
- Offer in kind

▸ The Nalubaaga wetland stewarded this priority

ENRICHING RELATION: RESIDENTS ⇌ WASTE

Collector Recognition

ID, gear and named routes

Twenty-four people already carry this neighbourhood's kaveera for about 1,000 UGX a kilo, unnamed and unprotected.

UNITS NEEDED	RESOURCED	REACHES
212 \$1,499	32 15% funded	24 collectors

180 Units of Caring still needed

- Invest Units of Caring
- Offer in kind

▸ The Nalubaaga wetland stewarded this priority

Every unit can be met with money or met with hands. Both land on the same ledger, and both are witnessed by the same circles.

app.obunturesets.com / resets / neighbourhood-eggwatiro / commit

YOUR SELECTED RESETS

Neighbourhood Eggwatiro

Three compost hubs, one per zone

651 units

Sorting Starter Kits

Colour-coded bins for 500 homes

424 units

RELATIONAL HEALING IMPACT

Residents ⇄ Waste

Shifting meaning from “throwing away” to “nourishing life.”

▸ The Nalubaaga wetland stewarded this priority

Through the Conference of Landstewards she bound her Obutaka to these activities as vital to healing this relation.

Your commitment joins collective will already expressed by 27 landstewards. You are not funding a proposal — you are resourcing what this place decided.

Complete your commitment

CHOOSE YOUR UNITS OF CARING

−

250

+

Your contribution

250 Units

Dollar value

\$1,767.50

Invest 250 Units of Caring →

Or offer these units in kind

PAYMENT METHOD

Card

Bank transfer

Cheque

What draws you to this relation? Your words go to the landstewards...

Join this activity's kinship circle

✓

Be invited to future Obutaka Gatherings

No intermediary rewrites the story between the decision and the money. The landstewards decide how the healing unfolds; those outside provide fuel for what was already chosen.

app.obunturesets.com / relational-accounting / residents-waste-healing

WITNESS GROUPS

Elder Circle

Youth Council

Women's Group

Wetland Proxies

RELATIONS HEALING

Waste perception

Wetland health

Neighbour trust

STATUS

Certified

ZA

Zone A Community Organisers

14 Nov · Kiwaatule, Zone A

Dialogue #15: “Waste is Wealth” — 80 households participate

Mothers shared composting techniques passed down from grandmothers. Youth created art from collected plastics. The shift in energy was palpable — from shame about waste to pride in transformation.

BEFORE

photo evidence

AFTER

photo evidence

Zone A

80 households

12 art pieces created

WITNESSED & VERIFIED BY

✓ Elder Nakimera

✓ Women's Group

✓ Youth Circle

Add your witness

View the full record

IMPACT OVERVIEW

+87

Obutaka reawakened

18

Active witnesses

6

Relations healing

65%

Certified

ACTIVITY

Wetland Proxies submitted water quality data · 1 day ago

Elder Circle verified the Zone A dialogue · 2 hours ago

Gross Relational Potential rather than GDP: success measured by the vitality, viability and capacity to evolve of the whole bioregion.

How can a bank account take instructions from a wetland?

Today, twenty-seven weighted voices and a wetland holding 4,600 decimals collapse into two named signatories at the counter. Obutaka ends at the bank door.

The Obutaka Account

An account that reads a collective mandate instead of a signature, and clears no payment unless Nalubaaga's participation is marked satisfied.

Obuntu Resets

A ledger where a unit met with money and a unit met in kind are worth the same, and a funder in London reads it as the landsteward does.

The Obuwanika Fund

A stewardship fund is a community-governed pool sourcing funds from a network of financial stewards learning to move money on life's own terms.

Uganda's National Environment Act already recognises the rights of nature. A wetland can hold rights in our law. What she cannot yet hold is an instruction to a bank.



FUNDING LIKE LIFE

The same sunlight. Completely different fruit.

The same sunlight falls on every plant in this valley. The jackfruit makes jackfruit from it. The banana makes banana. The papyrus makes papyrus. The sun does not decide what each one becomes. The plant decides. And no plant has ever filled in a form to ask for light.

Money works the opposite way round. It arrives with impact metrics, cookie-cutter conditions, and instructions about what to grow, and only after someone has written a proposal explaining why they deserve it.

A Unit of Caring turns it back around. The instructions are sourced from the intelligence of a place — by the people and the wetland who live with the result. Then the money arrives, as nourishment, on life's own terms.

So the question we bring you is not what should we fund. It is: how do we help a place get better at turning whatever reaches it — money, attention, labour, memory, rain — into more life?



Regenar Development Initiative

Rebuilding relations. Reconditioning landscapes

Kiwaatule means the drummings of joy. An elder told us nobody drums any more.

The Obutaka Gathering Cycle is us drumming
towards joy again. Every place has its own drum.

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