

A lush tropical forest scene with a person lying on the grass in the foreground. The person is wearing a white shirt and dark pants, and is lying on their back with their arms outstretched. The forest is dense with green foliage and tall trees. The sky is visible through the canopy, showing a clear blue color. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and natural.

3rd to 5th March 2026

EARTH-CENTRED GOVERNANCE & REGENERATION PRACTICES

KampOng Campus, Sabah

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The programme was co-designed with: **Gita Syahrani**, **Shrishtee Bajpai**, and **Jan Johanes Haina**, with special thanks to the **Plum Village** monastics and **Claire Vanderplank** for sharing their work for which we may draw wisdom from.

FSI | Forever Sabah Institute

is an integral part of Forever Sabah (FS): the transition towards a diversified, equitable circular economy in the Malaysian Borneo state of Sabah.

A significant suite of activities for FSI is “Forever Sabah Institute For Forever Sabah” (FSI4FS), under which FSI designs and offers learning activities for staff, teams and partners from the Forever Sabah web. Other programmes are generated through formal and informal partnerships, requests or relevance for specific learning and offers of teaching/sharing.

FS | Forever Sabah

is a 25-year programme to support Sabah's transition to a diversified, equitable, circular economy.

Forever Sabah, a civil society entity, serves as a collaborative social movement rather than a bureaucracy or NGO. It is an initiative rooted in local aspirations, built by an enthusiastic team who believe in utilising Sabahan knowledge and experience, and working with others and across sectors to build a better Sabah.

Do you have any questions or reflections?

Email us at fsi@foreversabah.org

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OVERVIEW

To contend with earth-centred governance is to ask: *how are decisions made when land, water, forests, communities, livelihoods, and more-than-human life are treated as part of the same field of responsibility?*

THE PROGRAMME

Earth-Centred Governance & Regeneration Practices was held from 3–5 March 2026 at KampOng Campus as a space to explore this question through learning, practice, and reflection. The programme brought together conversations on responsible bioeconomy, systemic alternatives, Indigenous and place-based worldviews, grief work, future imagination, and more-than-human listening.

THE INTENTION

Not to define earth-centred governance, but rather to create a space where participants can feel into what it might require in practice: different ways of listening, different forms of collaboration, and different responsibilities to what is already alive around us.

USING THIS COURSEBOOK

This coursebook gathers the flow, practices, prompts, and notes from the programme. It is written for facilitators who may want to understand how the space was held, or adapt parts of it for another context.

Some parts may be adapted according to the group, place, timing, and purpose. The flow does not need to be repeated perfectly, but it should be held with care.



PROCESS INVITATION

Move through this coursebook at your own pace.

Some parts of the programme may bring up grief, uncertainty, memory, or discomfort. Other parts may invite rest, imagination, play, and a deeper sense of relationship with land, community, and the more-than-human world.

As a facilitator, your role is to hold enough structure for people to feel guided, and enough space for the process to breathe. Stay close to the purpose of each practice, not only its form. Notice what the group may need more of: time, silence, grounding, translation, movement, witnessing, or clearer instruction.

Let the programme respond to the people, place, and moment you are in.

We drew from the practices and approaches of the Plum Village, Partnering with Nature, and Work That Reconnects (WTR), amongst others, as Forever Sabah Institute (FSI) co-facilitated the retreat and held space for the unravelling.

Community Practice Agreements

Throughout the process, we were guided by the following:

- Be on time for each session.
- Say your name before you speak.
- Speak personally and specifically, using “I” statements.
- Be inclusive; avoid exclusivity.
- Express displeasure in the group, not outside the circle.
- Commit to “hang in there.”
- Speak when moved to speak; don’t speak when not moved to speak.
- Be responsible for your success.
- Participate verbally and nonverbally.
- Be emotionally present with the group.
- Respect confidentiality.
- Listen for the bell, that marks the start or end of a session.
- Photos and recording only with permission.

RECURRING PRACTICES



Intention Setting / Check-In

Intention setting opens the programme as a simple act of arrival and a ritual of commitment, as is a check-in preceding each day's sessions and practices.

Naming an intention aloud allows participants to form an understanding of why they have shown up, as well as a reciprocal relationship with the circle and space that is being held.

Morning Stillness

We begin Day 2 and 3 of the retreat with 30 minutes of Morning Stillness, comprising either guided or walking meditation. This gives participants time to notice their bodies, the place they are in, and what they are bringing into the day.

Inspired by Plum Village monastic practices and resourced through these materials:

[Sitting Meditation](#)

[Walking Meditation](#)





Rest with Nature

Rest with Nature was held after lunch everyday, giving participants time to settle into the morning before moving into the second half of the day.

Participants were invited to find a sit spot in nature, rest quietly, and spend time with the land around them. Facilitators may invite participants to ask permission from Nature before entering the space, and to notice what it feels like to rest with nature rather than in it.

A short framing to send participants off: slow down, find a place that calls you, ask permission, listen, and return when called back.

Learn More:

- [Partnering with Nature by Claire Vanderplank](#)
- [Mountaintop Session: Partnering with Nature 2.0](#)

Circle Time & Sharing Reflections

We have heard that “change happens in dialogue.”

After a full day of sessions, participants break out into smaller groups to unpack the ideas and themes explored throughout the day. These formations allow participants to explore bubbling insights, thoughts, and feelings, and honour the co-learning journey they collectively moved through.

Facilitators may offer a prompt connected to the day’s inquiry. On Day 1, for example, the programme used the prompt:

What values are important to your life and livelihood?

Circle Time is also a deep listening practice. Participants do not need to advise, fix, or respond to everything that is shared. The practice is to listen, receive, and allow different experiences to sit alongside one another.

After Circle Time, participants come back to the larger group to close each day with a round of Sharing Reflections. Here, participants are invited to share if they feel moved to, with the insight that words can be a generous offering to others as learning happens through and with each other.





DAY 1
RESPONSIBLE BIO-ECONOMY

SESSION #1

RESPONSIBLE BIO-ECONOMY: ANXIETIES, REALITIES & POSSIBILITIES

with Gita Syahrani

WHAT ANXIETY MOVES US | OUR BIG “HOW” | WHAT SITS BEHIND THE SCENES

Gita Syahrani began her session with a very real anxiety. In Indonesia’s 2024 downstream investment targets, **more than 90% was set to flow into oil, gas, and other critical minerals**, while less than 10% was set aside for agriculture, forestry, and fisheries.

What if the next economic boom came from protecting nature rather than destroying it?

For Gita, the “how” is the value-chain collaboration. Through the Earth-Centred Economy Coalition (Koalisi Ekonomi Membumi), this means working with the people often sitting in the “missing middle”: farmers and community groups, companies and entrepreneurs, financiers, governments, off-takers, and consumers.

The work is not only to move products through a chain. It is to shift transactions into relationships.

Reflection Prompts:

- What is the anxiety that moves us here?
- What is our big how?
- What is the hidden infrastructure that keeps our work going?
- Where are we still treating relationships as transactions?
- Who are the willing and able people we can move with first?

The cacao fermentation basket was one clear image of this. It responds to rain, sun, temperature, timing, and local knowledge. It shows that innovation is not always something new arriving from outside. Sometimes it is already there, held in practice, waiting to be recognised and supported.

Gita also invited participants to look at their own “behind the scenes”. Behind every outcome are people making decisions under pressure, carrying fatigue, care, creativity, and responsibility. If the work is to last, this hidden infrastructure also needs tending.

Watch: [Responsible Bio-Economy | Anxieties, Realities & Possibilities](#)

BREAKOUT GROUP DISCUSSION: RESPONSIBLE BIO-ECONOMY

Duration: 40 minutes

After Gita's session, participants were invited to break into smaller groups to reflect on how the questions from her sharing landed in their own context.

This 40-minute discussion helps participants move from listening to locating: locating their own anxieties, their own ways forward, and the often-unseen support systems behind the work they do.

In small groups, invite participants to reflect on:

- What is the anxiety that moves us here?
- What is your big how?
- What is your behind the scenes?

Allow enough time for each person to speak. The aim is not to solve these questions immediately, but to hear what is present in the group and begin noticing where personal, organisational, and systems-level questions meet.

After, invite participants to return to the larger circle and share any patterns, questions, or insights that feel useful for the group to hear.

ACTIVITY #1 3D MODELLING: How Do You View Sabah?

Duration: ~1.5 hours



This activity invites participants to move from discussing into making.

Coming after Gita's session, the activity gives participants a way to explore Sabah's social, economic, political, ecological, and cultural landscapes through 3D modelling, a practice adapted from Theory U's 3D Systems Sculpting. The model does not need to be neat or complete.

It is a way to notice what people are seeing, sensing, worrying about, or hoping for.

Facilitator Instructions:

1. Prepare a blank 7x7ft canvas, modelling clay, figurines, trinkets, and anything else that may spark imagination.
2. Participants are invited to co-create a model that represents the current state of the Sabah system as they see it, onto the canvas using the materials provided.
3. Listen to what the others say and do, and build on each other's ideas. Ask participants to include themselves and their initiatives in the model.
4. Facilitators may begin with a simple framing:
 - How do you view Sabah right now?
 - What systems, relationships, tensions, or possibilities do you notice?
5. Invite participants to walk around the canvas slowly and notice what has been created.
6. Reflect on the model from the four different directions. One person reads aloud the questions below. Each person can respond briefly; (essential points can be captured).

3D Modelling Reflection Framework:

Feeling (Lover) 1. What do you love? (what excites you / ignites your best sources of energy?) 2. What frustrates you? (what causes you to lose energy?)	Perspective (Magician) 1. What are the underlying beliefs or assumptions? 2. What is seeking to emerge? 3. For this to happen, what needs to be let go of?
Truth (Warrior) 1. What are you not seeing? 2. What or who is missing? 3. What's at risk if nothing else would happen further than today?	Purpose / Presence (Sovereign) 1. What might we be needing to learn? 2. What is the call of the future that you feel now?

Reflection Prompts:

- What feels central in this model?
- What has been pushed to the edge?
- What relationships or tensions are showing up?
- Where do you notice extraction, care, resilience, or possibility?

In the next round, invite participants to redo the sculpture into a system of the possible future. Crystallise and capture your key insights – what clarified for you:

- Key structural differences between Sculpture 1 (current reality) and Sculpture 2 (possible future)? What specific adjustments or changes shifted it from Sculpture 1 to 2?
- Based on your insights, what 2 or 3 strategic leverages could help begin to move the ecology from here to there? What might block us?
- What first step(s) would you take in order to bring this emerging picture to life?

Once done, return to the group for reflection and sharing.

DAY 2
**GRIEF, FUTURE IMAGINATION
& SYSTEMIC ALTERNATIVES**

ACTIVITY #2

MIRROR WALK

Duration: 40 minutes

Mirror Walk is a 40-minute paired practice of trust and sensory awareness. It invites participants to slow down and meet the natural world beyond sight. The practice can help shift the group out of discussion and into direct contact with place, body, and the living world.

Reflection Prompts:

- What did you notice?
- What surprised you?
- What was it like to guide or be guided?

Facilitator Instructions:

1. Invite participants to form pairs.
2. One person will guide first, while the other keeps their eyes closed.
3. Guides are to move slowly, stay mostly silent, and take responsibility for their partner's safety.
4. Remind guides to pay attention to uneven ground, steps, insects, sharp textures, and sensitive plants.
5. As they walk, guides may offer sensory encounters with nature: sight, touch, smell, sound, feeling.
6. Every so often, the guide gently positions their partner's head, as if aiming a camera, and invites their partner to look into the mirror they have set for them.
7. The person being guided opens their eyes for a moment, takes in what is in front of them, then closes their eyes again.
8. Use a bell or clear sound to signal when it is time to switch roles.
9. After both rounds, invite participants to reflect in pairs, small groups, or the larger circle.



ACTIVITY #3

HONOURING OUR PAIN FOR THE WORLD

Duration: 1 hour

This practice allows participants to give voice to their grief, care, and concern for the world.

The invitation here is not to fix or solve, but to listen to what is present. The programme frames this as grieving with the polycrises of our times, and as a way of speaking to the idea that “the crisis is relational.”



Facilitator Instructions:

1. Invite participants to find a partner.
2. Ask each pair to sit back-to-back, facing nature.
3. Each person will have 10 minutes to speak. The listener's role is only to listen. No interrupting, advising, comforting, or fixing.
4. Offer the prompts:
 - Some things I love about being alive on Planet Earth are...
 - When I witness what is happening to our world, what really breaks my heart is...
 - Some of the people or beings I draw strength from are...
 - No matter what happens, I am committed to...
5. After the first person has shared, invite partners to switch.
6. When both people have spoken, bring everyone back to the larger group to share any thoughts, reflections, or observations – not on what their partner shared, but rather what the process brought up.

Some participants may feel grief, anger, numbness, tenderness, or uncertainty. Do not push for emotional depth. Let people share only what they feel moved to share.

ACTIVITY #4

MESSAGES FROM THE FUTURE

Duration: 1 hour

This practice invites participants to listen from the future.

After Honouring Our Pain and Rest with Nature, the group turns toward imagination, dreaming, and possibility. Participants are invited to imagine someone living one or two hundred years from now, looking back at us in the present.

Some people may receive clear words; others may only have images, fragments, or feelings. Let that be enough. The practice is not about predicting the future, but listening for what the future may be asking from the present.

Reflection Prompts:

- What did the future being have to say?
- What felt important in the message?
- What might we need to bring with us from today?
- What might we need to leave behind?

Facilitator Instructions:

1. Invite participants to sit quietly and close their eyes.
2. Guide them to imagine travelling forward through the coming generations.
3. Ask them to imagine a human being living one or two hundred years from now, looking back at them in their present life.
4. Invite participants to imagine what this being would want to say to them and to put it on paper, as if this future being were writing a letter just to you.
5. Give participants time to write. Around 10 minutes can be enough, but allow more time if the group needs it.
6. Let participants know that the message does not have to come only as a letter. They may also draw, journal images, or write scenes from the "now."
7. After writing, invite participants back to the larger circle to share if they feel moved to.

Learn More: [Letter From the Future](#) | [Work That Reconnects Networks](#)

SESSION #2

EARTHLY GOVERNANCE & SYSTEMIC ALTERNATIVES

with Shrishtee Bajpai

LOOK HONESTLY AT YOURSELF: WHAT YOU ARE TRYING TO MOVE AWAY FROM?

The dominant story of development has often been presented as progress. But for many communities, this has meant the loss of land, forest, river, culture, autonomy, and ways of living. Shrishtee Bajpai names the deeper systems beneath this: extraction, concentrated power, state-centred regimes, patriarchy, caste, race, anthropocentrism, and the false comfort of technical or market-based fixes.

From there, she turns toward alternatives, not as theories waiting to be invented, but as practices already alive in different places.

She speaks about earthly governance as a way of bringing human systems back into relationship with Earth's well-being. The examples she shares come from the ground: Indigenous self-rule, village assemblies, Territories of Life, rights of rivers, women-led farming collectives, and communities resisting extractive projects in favour of building their own ways of governing.

Reflection Prompts:

- What systems, habits, or assumptions are we trying to move away from?
- Where are alternatives already being practised around us?
- How do we recognise nature as more than resource?
- What would interspecies justice ask of our work?
- What can we learn from grounded resistance, and how do we take it forward?

These stories remind us that alternatives are not always new. Some are ancestral. Some are quiet. Some are already being practised by communities who have had to protect life because the systems around them have failed.

Shrishtee also brings in interspecies justice, asking:

What changes when rivers, forests, mountains, animals, plants, and ecosystems are not treated only as resources, but as beings with their own place, rights, and life?

Coming after the grief and future-facing practices, this session helps move the group toward imagination, grounded possibility, and the question of what existing alternatives can teach us.

Watch: [Earthly Governance & Systemic Alternatives](#)

DAY 3
**REMEMBERING RELATIONSHIP
WITH LAND**

SESSION #3

REMEMBERING RELATIONSHIP WITH LAND & OURSELVES

with Jan Johanes Haina

REMEMBERING RELATIONSHIP WITH LAND, ANCESTRY, SELF & THE WIDER WORLD

Speaking from a Māori worldview, Jan Johanes Haina shares that *whakapapa* as a concept that not only describes human genealogy, but as connection across many layers of life: family, people, origins, the natural world, sky, cosmos, and inner self.

This way of seeing does not separate relationship from responsibility. Values such as *whakapapa*, *manaakitanga*, *tautututu*, *rangatiratanga*, *aroha*, and *mauri* point to ways of living with care, reciprocity, respect, responsibility, and reverence.

Jan also names the histories that have broken these relationships: colonisation, land wars, imposed worldviews, land confiscation, and the suppression of language and culture. These are not only political histories. They are also histories of disconnection from land, identity, and memory.

Reflection Prompts:

- What relationships with land have shaped who we are?
- Where has separation from land, language, culture, or place shaped our lives and work?
- What does responsibility to land look like in practice?
- What might regeneration require us to remember, repair, or return to?
- How do we hold Indigenous and place-based knowledge with care, without flattening it into general lessons?

From there, he turns toward regeneration. Through stories of eco-cultural restoration and resilience in Aotearoa, Jan shows how restoring land can also mean restoring relationship: to place, to memory, to responsibility, and to the conditions that allow life to continue.

For facilitators, this session is not about turning Māori concepts into general lessons. It asks for careful listening to a worldview rooted in place and lived responsibility, while asking what remembering relationship with land might mean in our own context.

Watch: [Remembering Relationship with Land & Ourselves](#)

MILLING GROUP DISCUSSION: REMEMBERING RELATIONSHIP WITH LAND

Duration: 40 minutes

The Milling is a movement-based practice that helps participants notice how they meet, pass by, and become aware of one another.

In this programme, it can be used after Jan's session as a way to let the sharing settle in the body before moving into discussion. The practice begins in silence, with participants walking through the room without a fixed direction. It then slowly opens into moments of eye contact, encounter, and small group reflection.



This practice does not need a long explanation. Let participants experience the difference between rushing past others, slowing down, noticing, and meeting. Since it follows Jan's session, facilitators can gently connect the discussion back to awareness, disconnection, interconnection, and how we learn to see others more fully.

Facilitator Instructions:

1. Invite participants to mill around, walking in no particular direction or pattern.
2. Remind participants to stay silent until they are invited to speak.
3. Begin by asking participants to imagine they are walking on a busy city street. They are moving quickly, not really noticing who or what is around them.
4. After a short while, invite them to slow down and become more aware of their body, their pace, the room, and the people around them.
5. Invite participants to make soft eye contact when they meet another person. Remind them that they do not need to lock eyes. Simply relax their gaze and notice the person.
6. Shift the pace again. Invite participants to move a little faster, then look for a partner using only eye contact.
7. Once each person has found a partner, invite them to pause briefly together. You may offer a simple prompt connected to Jan's session, or allow the encounter to remain silent.
8. Invite participants to mill again. Repeat the process for one or two more encounters, allowing the pace to move between fast and slow.
9. For the final encounter, invite participants to form groups of 4–5.
10. In their groups, invite participants to discuss:
 - What did you experience during the milling?
 - Did you experience a sense of separation, connection, or something else?
 - During the milling, how did you feel curious about the world around you?
 - What from Jan's session has stayed with you?

Learn More: [The Milling](#), [Work That Reconnects Network](#)



ACTIVITY #5

COUNCIL OF ALL BEINGS

Duration: 1 hour

Council of All Beings invites participants to speak on behalf of another life-form.

Participants are not asked to think too hard about what to represent. They are invited to sit quietly and notice what being comes to them. It may be a plant, animal, river, mountain, soil, forest, sea, insect, or another part of the living world.

Facilitator Instructions:

1. Invite participants to sit quietly and close their eyes, if comfortable.
2. Ask them to relax and let another life-form come to them.
3. Encourage them to stay with the first being that appears, rather than trying to choose the “right” one.
4. Give them a few moments to imagine this being more fully:
 - What is its form?
 - How does it move?
 - What does the being sense?
 - What nourishes it?
 - What does it offer to others?
5. Invite participants to ask inwardly for permission to speak for this being.
6. If there is time, participants may create a simple mask, symbol, gesture, or name. If not, they can continue without one.
7. Form small groups of 3–4, or gather in one larger circle.
8. Invite each person to speak as their life-form. They can speak through three parts:
 - What is it like to be this life-form?
 - What difficulties or disruptions is it facing now?
 - What strength, gift, or message does it offer to humans?
9. When everyone has spoken, invite participants to return to themselves.
10. Close by asking participants to thank the life-form they spoke for, release that identity, and return the energy of the practice to the earth.

The source practice can include masks, movement, drumming, invocation, and a longer council process. For a shorter session, keep it simple. What matters is that participants have time to listen, speak as another being, and return gently to themselves.

Learn More: [Council of All Beings](#) | [Work That Reconnects Network](#)

CLOSING

After three days of learning, grief work, future imagination, stillness, time with nature, and more-than-human listening, people may be carrying different things. Some may feel clear. Others may feel tired, quiet, unsettled, or unsure. Do not rush this part.

Give participants time to notice what they are leaving with. The closing can be simple: a final circle, a few minutes of silence, a gesture of thanks, or one last round of sharing.

Facilitators may offer prompts such as:

- What are you carrying from this programme?
- What feels important not to forget?
- What is one practice, question, or responsibility you want to continue with?
- What do you want to thank before we close?

Participants do not need to make a big commitment. A small, honest next step is enough.

The work does not need to be tied up neatly. But the space should be closed with care, so participants do not leave feeling scattered or unfinished.

