




Gender Justice, Ecological Responsibility and Sustainable Development in Africa: A Theological Perspective

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Abstract

In numerous African societies, gender inequality is deeply rooted within both social norms and power structures. This inequality becomes particularly pronounced when it intersects with environmental crises, amplifying gender-specific vulnerabilities and sustaining cycles of marginalization. This article highlights the nexus between gender justice, ecological responsibility, and sustainable development, emphasizing the need for holistic approaches to address the root causes of these intertwined challenges. Using secondary source analysis, I explore the interplay of patriarchal structures and the unequal distribution and access to resources, offering theological insights into pathways for promoting gender equity, environmental sustainability, and social justice while also incorporating and respecting indigenous knowledge systems in Africa. Findings suggest that addressing the complex dynamics of gender injustice and environmental degradation can foster inclusive, environmentally sustainable development, prioritizing gender equity and social justice across African societies. Drawing upon insights from Oikos Theology and African Women's Theology, this examination reveals strategies to counteract these challenges and promote inclusive solutions for African communities.

Key Terms: African Women's Theology, Oikos Theology, African World View, Ecological Justice, Gender Justice, African Indigenous Women, Ecological Sustainability

Introduction

Embedded within Africa's cultural and ecological diversity are systems of knowledge, practices, and beliefs that have long guided human interaction with nature. Indigenous communities have historically coexisted with the environment, drawing sustenance from the land while preserving its integrity for future generations through traditional ecological knowledge passed down through generations. This knowledge embodies a profound respect for the interconnectedness of all living things and sustainable stewardship (Maimela, 1991: 5). However, this ecological heritage is increasingly threatened by rapid urbanization, industrialization, globalization, and the enduring impacts of colonialism. These challenges are further compounded by complex socio-political and socio-cultural factors, contributing to the erosion of African indigenous ways of life (Maimela, 1991: 5). This article, through secondary source analysis, examines the intricate dynamics between gender injustice and environmental degradation in Africa. The intersections between these issues present unique vulnerabilities, as gender inequality often amplifies the adverse effects of environmental harm on communities. I argue that addressing these intertwined challenges is essential for fostering both equitable and environmentally sustainable societies, securing the wellbeing of present



and future generations. Drawing on insights from African Women's Theology and Oikos Theology, I explore how gender injustice and environmental degradation manifest within African societies and discuss their broader implications for sustainable development.

African Women's Theology

African Women's Theology underscores the heterogeneity among women and the uniqueness of African women's struggle for gender justice. It highlights the continent's extensive history of women and environmental injustices noting that African women's ecological responses are deeply rooted in African cosmologies and anthropologies which centralize women's roles in Earth care (Siwila, 2014). To unearth indigenous knowledge and traditions that celebrate the sacredness of Mother Earth, African women theologians develop theories such as African Cultural Hermeneutics. These theories aim to foster life-affirming theologies that transform ecological practices towards justice for women and the environment (Kanyoro, 2002). African Women's Theology challenges the anthropocentric and androcentric perspectives in Western theological thought and emphasise indigenous ways of life. The interconnected struggle against the domination of nature and indigenous African women is foregrounded within African Women's Theology, reflecting the intersections of gender and environmental oppression and injustice. Themes of community and solidarity in African Women's Theology reflect partnership with all who seek gender and ecological justice by promoting Ubuntu philosophy which encapsulates ecological and economic sustainability through treating the Earth with integrity and all living things with integrity. Ubuntu philosophy emphasises the interconnectedness of all life, rejecting dualism and hierarchies in favour of communal living (LenkaBula, 2008).

African women theologians foreground the Bible in all their theological perspectives, emphasising community and belonging in their theological interpretations. They perceive life as an unbroken circle, highlighting the unity and interdependence of all of creation (Chisale, 2018: 14, LenkaBula, 2008). Opposing the colonial agenda that sought to divide African indigenous men from African indigenous women, African women theologians seek to reinstate the African women-nature relationship in partnership with African men, because this division, they assert, is harmful to the Earth and fosters gender injustice. Taking seriously the ways in which environmental degradation affects all people, African women theologians mobilize communities towards environmental justice and sustainability. Solidarity is the foundation of their struggle against all forms of injustice, as they address ecological, economic, social, political, and religious injustices in their quest to enhance ecological consciousness (Chisale, 2023).

Oikos Theology

According to *The Oikos Journey: A Theological Reflection of the Economic Crisis in South Africa* by the Diakonia Council of Churches (2006), Oikos Theology is rooted in the Greek term 'oikos,' meaning 'house' or 'household,' symbolizing the Earth as the collective home of all creation. This framework emphasizes that economic justice is integral to God's design for the Earth, urging a balanced approach to production, consumption, and waste to sustain the planet for future generations. Central to Oikos Theology is the belief that economy and ecology are inseparably linked, with industrial exploitation leading to environmental degradation that disrupts the intended balance.

Oikos Theology outlines seven guiding principles:

1. **Earth as God's Grace-Filled Household:** The Earth, imbued with God's grace, provides resources to sustain life. Exploitative economic practices contradict God's intended harmony.



2. **Honouring Human Labor:** When labour is respected, it becomes a reflection of divine creativity. Exploitation, however, strips dignity from workers, going against God's design for work as a source of purpose and fulfilment.
3. **Interconnection of Economy, Ecology, and Human Dignity:** A just economic system must ensure human well-being, including the essential role of rest, aligning with the ideals of justice and equality.
4. **Shared Prosperity:** Equitable resource distribution is crucial within God's economy. Economic justice is intertwined with responsible ecological stewardship, as both are essential for sustaining creation.
5. **Dignity Over Profit:** Pursuing prosperity at the expense of human dignity undermines God's purpose for creation and disrupts communal well-being.
6. **Discipleship:** True discipleship involves resisting injustice and advocating for a world that reflects God's justice and equity.
7. **Sustainable Living:** Humanity, as God's stewards, is responsible for preserving the Earth for future generations, participating in creation as co-caretakers with God.

Together, these principles call for a re-evaluation of human relationships with the natural world, framing economic and environmental actions within Oikos Theology's vision of unity, justice, and sustainable stewardship (Diakonia, 2006).

Contextualizing Gender Injustice and Environmental Degradation in Africa

Gender inequality remains a pervasive issue in many African societies and are manifest in various ways, such as unequal access to resources, limited economic opportunities, discriminatory cultural and religious practices and entrenched patriarchy embedded in all social arrangements (Naicker, 2021: 27). Within this patriarchal model, women and girls bear the brunt of all manner of injustices ranging from barriers to education and healthcare, rampant unemployment, lack of participation in the economy and politics, violence, and crippling poverty. These gender disparities persist, perpetuating cycles of marginalization for millions of women and girls in Africa (Abrahams, 2017). Coupled with these, the negative effects of environmental degradation further compound women's wellbeing. Scholars note that this vulnerability is because of several factors, including inept governmental policies and interventions, rapid population growth, unsustainable land use practices, deforestation, soil erosion, pollution, and climate change (Vengesai and Naicker, 2022: 5).

According to Nelson and Staley (2015), Aworinde (2018), and Okenwa (2015), women should assume central roles as custodians of the environment in many African contexts as they possess profound insights regarding environmental management and preservation. Women's intimate connection with the land and ecosystems position them as key stakeholders on environmental preservation efforts. However, entrenched gender norms and taboos often curtail women's agency, impeding their involvement in decision-making processes and restricting access to vital resources. These structural barriers hinder women's capacity to meaningfully contribute to initiatives aimed at promoting ecological justice and sustainability.

The Gendered Legacy of Colonialism on Indigenous Ways of Life

Indigenous peoples of Africa have since ancient times been deeply rooted in their connection to the natural world, displaying and embodying a distinct relationship with the Earth, often referred to metaphorically as 'Mother Earth (Siwila, 2014).' This symbolizes the intrinsic value and sacredness Africans ascribe to the Earth. For indigenous African communities, Earth is not merely a source of resources but a living deity, embodying life in its entirety. Indigenous African communities' profound sense of connectedness to the land shapes their values and culture, forming an inseparable bond with creation (Ngwenya, 2020): 17. Amidst the ongoing



ecological crisis in Africa, particularly as it relates to gender injustice and sustainable development, addressing the connection between gendered poverty and environmental degradation is significant. The traditional African worldview which values and safeguards the environment while conceptualizing humanity as custodians of divine creation warrants elevation and propagation to reinstate the ethos of responsible stewardship and sustainable development (Anim, 2019: 117-118). This indigenous ecological perspective offers profound insight into contemporary environmental problems.

Recognizing, acknowledging, and valuing this traditional knowledge system is indispensable in confronting the intertwined challenges of gender injustice and environmental degradation that impede sustainable development in Africa. Foregrounding the indigenous African perspective is important as a way forward in fostering comprehensive approaches that acknowledge the complex interplay of social, cultural, religious, political, environmental, and economic factors. Moreover, it underscores the ethical imperative of addressing issues of social injustice and environmental sustainability to achieve lasting outcomes. By advocating for the integration of indigenous perspectives, stewardship and sustainability, this research underscores the significance of mainstreaming gender justice considerations in environmental policymaking and advocacy endeavours.

Africa's ecological heritage faces multifaceted threats stemming from various human activities and historical legacies. These threats are linked to the continent's socio-economic dynamics and pose significant challenges for present and future generations. The enduring effects of colonialism profoundly shape issues of land tenure systems, resource management practices and cultural and religious identities in Africa (Mawere and Tshamano, 2023). Colonialism not only disrupted the physical landscape but also the socio-cultural fabric of African societies, including the role of African indigenous women in environmental stewardship and resource management. Colonial policies not only depleted natural resources but also severed traditional practices of ecological sustainability and spiritual connectedness to the land. The colonial conception of the environment perpetuated religious, cultural, social, and economic injustices by imposing European worldviews on African societies. Colonial discourse constructed African cultures as static and primitive, contrasting them with what colonists believed was a dynamic and superior European civilization. This belief system, rooted in patriarchal ideologies, marginalized African indigenous women, and perpetuated environmental exploitation (Mawere and Tshamano, 2023).

The examination of colonial power and its impact on gender dynamics reveals that although sexuality and gender play roles in hegemonic structures, they are secondary to race, which constitutes the central element. Gender, race, and class form hierarchical layers in the epistemology of domination. So, race, gender, and class, in that order, are inseparable in comprehending imperial processes. Gender power dynamics, within this framework, were integral to establishing and maintain imperial ventures. In other words, race, gender, and class are integral to understanding how experiences of oppression and subjectivity were constructed and maintained. The complexity of gender dynamics within colonial power structures can be observed in the oppression of racialized women by racialized men. As constituents of imperialism, patriarchy and heterosexuality aimed at controlling production and sexuality. Resultantly, African indigenous women were positioned at the intersection of multiple oppressions from white men, white women, and African indigenous men. It is this legacy that African indigenous women in Africa grapple with to this day. This colonial discourse sexualized and dehumanized all African populations, women in particular, reinforcing the patriarchal and heterosexist norm (Mawere and Tshamano, 2023). African indigenous women were depicted as hypersexualized seductresses, objectified for the gratification of colonial desires. In this way, colonial powers adopted patriarchy and heterosexuality as a way to infantilize and



biologize African indigenous women, and render African men invisible, perpetuating colonial power structures (Bertolt, 2018). Understanding the coloniality of gender necessitates analysing the entanglement of race, gender and class in shaping colonial power dynamics and oppressive structures. This entails examining historical discourses, power relations, and the construction of categories within colonial contexts. In deconstructing these narratives and interrogating prevailing norms, the multifaceted nature of oppression and resistance is elucidated.

The aftermath of colonialism saw a shift from indigenous organic cosmologies to mechanistic views of the environment, passively subject to human exploitation. Indigenous knowledge systems were eroded and distorted, bearing the imprint of colonial domination and white male hegemony (Kaunda, 2016). In essence, the specific historical experience of colonialism contributed to the alienation of Africans from the environment where previously African indigenous women and men were interconnected with the environment (Kaunda, 2016). As Siwila (2014) points out, given the heightened ecological challenges disproportionately affecting African indigenous women, it becomes imperative to adopt novel approaches in engaging with ecological discourses. An avenue to pursue in this regard involves scrutinizing societal responses to indigenous knowledge originating from the margins of our communities (Siwila, 2014: 141). African Women's Theology accentuates the interconnectedness between spirituality, community, and nature, emphasising the sacredness of the Earth and the inherent dignity of all living things (Maseno, 2021: 2). Moreover, it highlights the agency and resilience of African indigenous women in responding to historical injustices. Despite marginalization and exploitation imposed by colonial powers, African indigenous women have been pivotal in grassroots movements for environmental justice, advocating for land rights, sustainable livelihoods, and cultural revitalization (Kilonza, 2023: 1). African Women's Theology critiques the patriarchal structures underpinning colonialism and its legacies, including gender-based inequalities in land ownership and resource access. Colonial policies reinforced gender hierarchies that marginalize African indigenous women from their traditional roles as custodians of the land, exacerbating environmental degradation and social inequality. By centring the experiences of African indigenous women, African Women's Theology illuminates the gendered dimensions of environmental injustice and the imperative for gender-responsive approaches to ecological conservation and development. A key tenet of African Women's Theology is the promotion of the dismantling of patriarchal structures that disempower women and undermine their contribution to environmental stewardship. This entails efforts to revitalize indigenous knowledge systems and practices and prioritize the inclusion of African indigenous women in leadership and policymaking roles because undoubtedly, African indigenous women possess invaluable expertise regarding gender justice and sustainable ecological development (Chirongoma, 2022).

Efforts to revitalize indigenous knowledge systems and traditional land use practices must take seriously the inclusion and leadership of African indigenous women, who often possess invaluable knowledge and expertise regarding sustainable agriculture, herbal medicine and community-based conservation. By amplifying the voices of African indigenous women and foregrounding the fortitude and agency of these women in environmental discourses and policymaking, African Women's Theology offers a transformative vision of ecological justice that recognizes the interconnectedness of gender, power, and ecology. Furthermore, African Women's Theology challenges dominant narratives of environmental degradation and offers alternative pathways towards ecological sustainability, social justice, and spiritual renewal (Chirongoma, 2022). Integrating African Women's Theology into conservation and development initiatives can help forge more inclusive, equitable, and holistic approaches to safeguarding Africa's natural ecosystems and cultural diversity for future generations.



Integrating Gender Justice and Ecological Responsibility in African Theological Discourses

There is a pressing need for a gendered approach to addressing Africa's ecological challenges. This involves a concerted effort to reinstate African indigenous women as environmental leaders, divesting them of colonial influences and allowing them to embrace indigenous ecological knowledge. As highlighted above, colonial powers have imposed their cultural norms and standards on African indigenous women, disregarding the ecological stewardship practiced by indigenous women (Alokwu, 2009). This not only exacerbates environmental degradation but also serve to perpetuate gender inequalities and undermine the environmental caretaker role of indigenous African women. By centering African women's knowledge and leadership, more equitable and sustainable approaches to resource management and environmental justice will be fostered. Thus, promoting indigenous women's agency and astuteness with regard to ecological preservation is not only essential for achieving environmental sustainability but also for advancing social justice and human rights in African communities (Alokwu, 2009: 304-305).

African indigenous women hold profound knowledge and spiritual connection to their environment. The environment is viewed as a sacred entity, deserving of reverence, nurture, and protection. This holistic understanding is commensurate with Oikos Theology which is deeply rooted in African indigenous knowledge systems and perceives creation as an interconnected web where human beings, the divine and nature are inseparable. Oikos Theology supports the idea that the exploitation and abuse of the land is deviation from the ecological preservation that has been handed down from generation to generation (Maseno, 2021: 2). Oikos Theology urges acknowledgment of the unique challenges African indigenous women experience in the context of ecological degradation.

In day to day living, particularly within under resourced communities, African indigenous women bear the responsibility of sustaining livelihoods and preserving traditional knowledge. Yet, they are disproportionately affected by ecological disasters due to entrenched gender inequalities and limited access to resources and decision-making processes. This is the gendered impact of ecological degradation. The exclusion of African indigenous women from land resources profoundly impacts their socio-economic status and perpetuates cycles of injustice. Land, a sacred heritage, and source of life, holds immense cultural, social, and economic significance. Women's access to land and resources determines their levels of sustainability and empowerment. The denial of land rights distorts their connection to the Earth and undermines indigenous principles of stewardship and equity (Alokwu, 2009: 273). Within the framework of Oikos Theology, the concept 'oikos' symbolizes a home for all. Oikos Theology maintains that this 'home for all' becomes tainted when certain demographics are unjustly denied access to land and resources.

Moreover, it maintains that all of humanity is mandated by God to be stewards of God's Earth. With the increasing prioritization of gendered heterosexuality, transnational corporations, foreign investors and wealthy elite, African indigenous women's ownership, leadership and management skills and capabilities are repeatedly sidelined (Alokwu, 2009: 274). Moreover, globalization and commodification of land further marginalizes already marginalized groups, including African indigenous women. South Africa's policy of apartheid and culturally constructed gender divides illustrate how European racism and culturally constructed gender divides deprive and exclude people, particularly African indigenous women. In contrast, Oikos Theology affirms the Earth as God's gift to be enjoyed and nurtured by all of humanity, not exploited and destroyed for selfish gain (Alokwu, 2009: 274).



Oikos Theology emphasizes the restoration of harmonious relationships within the interconnected web of creation. The integration of gender justice and ecological responsibility must become a critical area of reflection within theological discourses related to ecological degradation, emphasising the interplay between economy, ecology, and human dignity. Economic justice for women must be viewed from a faith perspective that promotes a balance between economic activities and ecological systems that support life on Earth.

The inseparability of economy and ecology must be highlighted with specific advocacy for harmony between human activities and the natural environment. Moreover, such advocacy must underscore that engagement with God and the Earth must encapsulate social justice, equality, and the flourishing of creation. In this context, the equitable distribution of resources and opportunities to ensure equal rights and access for women, men and all marginalized people must be given serious consideration. This includes access to education, healthcare, employment, and participation in leadership and decision-making processes. In order to achieve this, patriarchal structures and practices that perpetuate inequality must be challenged in theological discourses (Naicker, 2021).

Incorporating ecological responsibility in theological discourses will necessitate advocacy for the reduction of pollution, conserving natural resources, and promoting biodiversity by recognizing and respecting the interconnectedness of all living things. Theological discourses regarding ecological degradation must consider deeply how traditional knowledge systems have been overlooked or undervalued in favour of modern, industrial approaches that prioritize short-term gains over long-term sustainability. Indigenous practices of land management, crop rotation, and water conservation, often advocated for by indigenous women, must be seen as vital for maintain the health of the environment (Mangayi, 2023; Nduye, 2011: 46-48).

The integration of gender justice and ecological responsibility in theological discourses on environmental degradation has profound implications for how we understand and engage with God's world, urging a more holistic and sustainable approach to development. Addressing economic systems that perpetuate ecological degradation and gender injustice requires the challenging of the commodification of labour and the environment, recognising the intrinsic value of both beyond economic utility. In essence, ecological sustainability cannot be addressed without addressing social equity. This involves protecting the rights of indigenous communities and recognizing their role in environmental stewardship. It also entails ensuring all people have access to clean water, air, and land. Sustainable development must be inclusive and participatory, allowing marginalized communities and voices a space to be heard and to practice their agency.

Drawing on the principles of Oikos Theology, religious leaders and communities must advocate for more sustainable and just practices. This entails education about the interconnectedness of economics and ecological development within the context of social and environmental justice. Integrating these issues involves concrete theological frameworks that include intervention at policy and advocacy levels, community organizing and grassroots initiatives. Through the implementation of theological education programs, workshops and campaigns, the divine imperative of gender equality and ecological sustainability will become an important aspect within theological initiatives. Concomitant to that, incorporating advocacy for fair wages, safe working conditions and environmental protection will enhance theological initiatives towards just and sustainable development. Moreover, theological interventions cannot be mere talk shops. Decisive and deliberate measures must be put in place to support community-based projects such as urban food gardens, renewable energy initiatives and conservation efforts as theological interventions. In all these efforts, partnership and collaboration are essential. Establishing partnerships between religious organizations, NGOs,



and government agencies will significantly contribute to addressing systemic issues and promoting sustainable development. Essentially, Oikos Theology calls for a deeper commitment to justice and sustainability. It sanctions the reimagining of economic and ecological practices in ways that honour the intrinsic value of creation and promotes the flourishing of all people in the journey to moving towards a more equitable and sustainable future.

Analysis

The intersection of gender justice, ecological responsibility, and sustainable development in Africa is laden with complexities, requiring a nuanced analysis of the historical, cultural, and socio-political frameworks that shape this nexus. This analysis reveals how colonial, and apartheid legacies have exacerbated ecological degradation and social inequality, creating interlinked systems of oppression that affect African women disproportionately. The exploitation of African lands, coupled with the marginalization of indigenous women, is not merely a relic of the past but an enduring pattern that informs current socio-economic and ecological structures. These structures, deeply intertwined with colonial histories, continue to sustain both gender-based and ecological injustices, perpetuating inequalities in resource distribution, land ownership, and social mobility.

Colonialism introduced extractive economies that not only degraded African ecosystems but also disrupted traditional social structures and roles. Indigenous women, historically viewed as custodians of nature, were disproportionately affected, as their societal roles positioned them as key intermediaries between communities and the land. As colonial economies commodified natural resources, indigenous knowledge systems and women's environmental stewardship were systematically devalued, and the ecological contributions of African women were sidelined in favour of extractive practices that benefited colonial powers. This historical backdrop illustrates how ecological degradation and gender injustices are mutually reinforcing issues, rooted in power imbalances and cultural hegemonies that have persisted through post-colonial African societies. The vestiges of these power structures remain embedded in contemporary policy frameworks, economic priorities, and gendered social norms.

Addressing these intertwined challenges calls for moving beyond traditional development models toward more holistic approaches. I propose that, change is possible and achievable, as informed by African Women's Theology and Oikos Theology. African Women's Theology, which centres the voices and experiences of African women, recognizes the unique role of women as agents of ecological wisdom and community resilience. This theological framework emphasizes a gendered analysis that not only highlights the vulnerabilities faced by African women in the face of environmental injustice but also positions them as active change agents in the struggle for environmental sustainability and social equity. Through this lens, African women's indigenous knowledge becomes a critical resource for sustainable environmental practices, offering pathways for ecological stewardship that are deeply rooted in cultural and spiritual values of interconnectedness and care.

Oikos Theology, with its emphasis on interconnectedness and collective responsibility, positions humanity as stewards of the Earth and calls for an ethical framework that transcends individualistic, profit-driven approaches to resource management. This theological perspective underscores the need for a paradigm shift in development practices, advocating for policies and initiatives that honour the interconnectedness of ecological and human systems. By integrating gender justice and ecological responsibility into the core of sustainable development, Oikos Theology aligns with indigenous African worldviews that see humans, land, and nature as part of an indivisible whole.



To advance both ecological responsibility and gender justice in Africa, policies must prioritize indigenous women as key stakeholders in environmental governance and sustainable development. This includes implementing systemic reforms that enable equitable access to resources, ownership rights, and decision-making processes for marginalized communities. Community-driven conservation projects, grounded in indigenous knowledge, can serve as sustainable models that resist exploitative practices while reinforcing women's leadership in ecological stewardship. Moreover, educational initiatives that emphasize gender-sensitive ecological literacy can empower the next generation to challenge entrenched power dynamics and advocate for inclusive, sustainable development.

Partnerships among religious institutions, NGOs, and government bodies are also vital in dismantling oppressive structures and promoting a more just, equitable, and sustainable future. These collaborations can create platforms for African women's voices to be heard, ensuring that their ecological knowledge and leadership are respected and integrated into policies at local, national, and regional levels. By fostering solidarity within and beyond African communities, these partnerships reinforce the principles of justice, equity, and sustainability, setting a precedent for development practices that are both ethically sound and ecologically sustainable.

Conclusion

The pursuit of a just and sustainable Africa requires collective efforts that bridges gender justice with ecological responsibility. Recognizing the pivotal role of indigenous African women and valuing their ecological knowledge is not only an ethical imperative but a practical one. African women's insights and expertise offer essential guidance for restoring and preserving African ecosystems, aligning ecological practices with cultural traditions and sustainable development goals. By honouring the knowledge and agency of African women, and by challenging the deeply rooted systems that perpetuate inequality and environmental exploitation, we pave a way forward that respects both cultural heritage and ecological integrity.

Through a theology rooted in Ubuntu and the principles of Oikos, African communities are called to reconnect with their roots in their relationships with both the Earth and one another. Ubuntu reminds us that our existence is interconnected, and our actions resonate across generations, while Oikos Theology underscores the duty of care for the home we all share. Embracing these values compels a shift in attitudes and practices toward stewardship and collective responsibility, empowering communities to adopt sustainable approaches that prioritize equity. This journey, rooted in interdependence, invites us all to reimagine a future marked by justice, equity, and sustainability—a future that upholds the well-being of current and future generations and restores harmony between humanity and the natural world.

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