

## ***“An Opportunity to Imagine Another World”*: An Ethnographic Report on Platohedro’s *Principles of Buen Vivir***

### **Introduction: Alliances and Collective Reflections**

During the Covid-19 pandemic, Platohedro, an art and social activism collective in Medellin, Colombia, and their friends and allies across Latin America, embarked on a journey to re-imagine the *Buen Vivir* (Good Living) as a set of principles that can inspire and drive political practices of commoning. This report reflects on the context, practices, and outcomes of this exercise. It does so by drawing from, a) a content analysis of the textual work produced by Platohedro for the *Power to the Commons!* project and, b) a follow-up interview with three members of the Platohedro teams.

The three texts that form the basis of this meta-analysis are Platohedro’s *Principles of Buen Vivir*, the transcription of the *Buen Vivir* radio sessions, and the *Homemade Anomaly Antenna*. The methodology deployed for this report amalgamates ethnographic fieldwork, meta-analysis, and textual/content analysis. It is based on a long-term collaboration between the Platohedro team and the researcher (Penny Travlou), and the experimentation with collaborative and peer-to-peer ethnographic practices this collaboration has made possible. Reflecting critically on the ethnographic canon, the Platohedro team came up with the suggestion to replace the term ‘ethnography’ with ‘a methodology of alliances’. This is to acknowledge the close links between ‘ethnography’ and colonialism and the extractivist traditions of knowledge production in Latin America (and generally the Global South). The term ‘alliances’, on the other hand, positions all persons involved in research endeavour in an equal, horizontal relation, and suggests the decolonisation of knowledge through praxis. This analysis is aligned with Platohedro’s proposal. Nonetheless, in this report, the term ‘ethnography’ is retained to describe the process (stages, tools, and methods) of analysis.

At its core, the research that underpins this report is based on dialogue and collective reflection. The Platohedro team and the researcher have met bimonthly since September 2020 to develop the various stages of the research and decide on its procedures and materials. The Platohedro team prepared the three documents (named above) in English. The researcher analysed the texts by developing a taxonomy of ethnographic codes (keywords). Based on this coding, the researcher prepared thematic questions and conducted reflective discussion, in the form of semi-structured interviews, with three Platohedro team members (Alexander Correa, Lucian Fleischman and Maria R. Collado) to discuss and interpret the documents together. In the present report, the researcher attempts a meta-analysis of these discussions and interactions.

### ***Buen Vivir*, the Commons, and Commoning**

This report takes its title from Alberto Acosta’s (2012) paper, *Buen Vivir: An Opportunity to Imagine Another World*. Echoing the opening line in the *Communist Manifesto*, “*a spectre is haunting Europe; the spectre of communism*” (Marx and Engels 1847/2010: 15), Acosta begins his paper with an analogous provocation: “*a phantom has been sweeping across the globe – the phantom of development*” (Acosta 2012: 192). He explains that:

*If the idea of development is in crisis in our intellectual landscape, we must necessarily question the concept of progress, which is understood as the productivist logic of always having more and more, which emerged about 500 years ago in Europe. (ibid.: 194)*

In his view, looking retrospectively into other ways of living, and to ancestral knowledge and indigenous values, makes it possible to imagine another world beyond that of capitalist development and growth. He refers to the Latin American concept of *Buen Vivir*, which translates to English as ‘good living’, wellbeing. *Buen Vivir* is a cosmovision, a worldview, of harmonious co-habitation between humans, more-than-humans, and nature. *Buen Vivir* rejects a linear notion of progress; it is not about living better than others or in the past, but about “*life to the fullest*”.

*It is not focused on achieved outcomes, but on changing the distribution of power and how the economy and society are structured, subsequently benefiting all living things.* (Gerlach 2019 online)

The notion of *Buen Vivir* has its roots in the culture of indigenous communities in the Andes. It is directly linked to what Quechua people of Ecuador call *Sumak Kawsay*: ‘knowing how to live well’. *Sumak Kawsay* is a set of principles on how to live a good life, informed by the notions of measure and harmony with nature’s cycles. It is worth mentioning here that the indigenous languages of Latin America have no synonym for ‘development’; neither have words to describe poverty and wealth as dependent on the accumulation of commodities (Acosta 2012; Prada Alcoreza 2013). It is about a life in harmony and co-existence between humans, more-than-humans and nature and not about living better than others or exploiting others. *Sumak Kawsay* is a ‘system of life’ based on the process of becoming, and on learning how to live well: a way of life that is community-centric, ecologically balanced, and culturally sensitive. *Buen Vivir* is thus a contemporary interpretation of the ancestral cosmovision of *Sumak Kawsay*.

*Buen Vivir points to an ethic of that which is enough for the whole community, not just for the individual. A Buen Vivir implies an integrating holistic vision of the human being, immersed in the great earthly community, that includes, besides humans, the air, water, soil, mountains, trees, and animals; it is to be in profound community with Pachamama (Our Mother Earth), with the energies of the Universe, and with God.* (Boff, 2009 online)

Within Latin America, *Sumak Kawsay* gained further visibility and recognition by being included in the Constitution of Ecuador in 2008 in the form of the *Rights of Nature*: “We [...] hereby decide to build a new form of public coexistence, in diversity and in harmony with nature, to achieve the good way of living” ([www.rapidtransition.org](http://www.rapidtransition.org), 2018).

The Bolivian Constitution of 2009 also recognised *Buen Vivir* as a principle that should guide state action. In 2011, again in Bolivia, the *Law of Mother Nature* was the first national-level legislation in the world to bestow rights to the natural world. As well as drawing from indigenous traditions, these constitutional and legal reforms build on alternative philosophies of development that reject the neoliberal logic of extractivism (a view of the natural world as a largely inexhaustible reservoir of resources to be exploited) and the ecological and social destruction this has wrought in Latin America. These reforms signal a move towards a developmental approach that prioritises ecological balance over relentless growth. As such, *Buen Vivir* is a political praxis. “*To build Buen Vivir, we need to get rid of relations of domination and exploitation by means of decolonisation and dismantling patriarchy*” (Vega 2013: 161). It specifically calls for political action for decolonisation and towards many feminism(s), an “*equilibrium between women, men and Mother Earth, our Pachamama*” (Vega 2013: 163).

In recent years, *Buen Vivir* has generated interest internationally. Academic scholars from the Global North have attempted to link *Buen Vivir* to the Western concept of degrowth and the commons that also articulate a vision of a more equal and communal life beyond the paradigm of capitalist growth (see Altmann 2019). This is what Ramón Grosfoguel considers epistemic extractivism where the terms

as *Buen Vivir* have been colonized by Western scholarship “by introducing them in a subordinated position in the hegemonic knowledge (Grosfoguel 2015: 38). Referring to the commons in particular, there are fundamental differences with *Buen Vivir*. For instance, in her work on the governance of the commons, Elinor Ostrom (1990) explicitly refers to common pool resources and their management by people/communities. This is an anthropocentric approach that overlooks the rights of other-than-human subjectivities and of nature itself. Indeed, Bolivian writer on indigenous rights, Gustavo Soto Santiesteban (Soto Santiesteban and Helfrich 2015), argues that the main difference between the two concepts is that *Buen Vivir* is “cosmomorphic” and centred around Mother Nature while the commons tend to be “anthropomorphic” and based on the wider concept of law (e.g. land-use rights and governance). As a term, ‘the commons’ is often deployed in reference to struggles of individuals and communities to access, and acquire or defend rights to, and/or ownership of common resources. Current literature on the commons also focuses on the urban context and relates closely to Henri Lefebvre’s (1990) ‘right to the city’ (see Harvey 2011; Stavrides 2016). For the commons, therefore, the point of departure is struggle and resistance against antagonistic stakeholders – the state and/or private corporations and other owners. *Buen Vivir*, on the other hand, has different underpinnings: at its core is a vision of equilibrium and harmonious coexistence of many species, and a way of becoming: a continuous transformation of humans, more-than-humans, and nature through the very processes of their living together. After all, *Buen Vivir* is “an opportunity to collectively design new forms of living” (Acosta, 2012: 195. Undoubtedly, the commons and *Buen Vivir* are very close to each other conceptually, but their point of departure differs. As activists David Bollier and Silke Helfrich (2012) suggest in their book, *The Wealth of the Commons*, the conceptualisations of the commons – including that of *Buen Vivir* - have a specific history. Every new iteration of these concepts and principles is dependent on the specificities of the land and societies where and by which it is articulated.

What seems to quite well aligned with *Buen Vivir*, nevertheless, is ‘commoning’: the notion of making/becoming a common. As Massimo De Angelis writes,

*To turn a noun – commons – into a verb [commoning] simply grounds it in what is, after all, life flow: there are no commons without incessant activities of commoning, of (re)producing in common. But it is through (re)production in common that communities of producers decide for themselves the norms, values, and measures of things. (De Angelis in Soto Santiesteban and Helfrich 2014 online)*

Speaking about commoning rather than the commons follows the current theoretical shift towards the recognition of the processes of creating and nurturing communities as advocated, for instance, by Bollier and Helfrich (2014, 2015). This recognition is also a critique of the limited view of the commons as (only) a pool of resources (see Ostrom 1990). As Linebaugh puts it,

*To speak of the commons as if it were a natural resource is misleading at best and dangerous at worst. The commons is an activity and, if anything, it expresses relationships in society that are inseparable from relations to nature. It might be better to keep the word as a verb, an activity, rather than as a noun, a substantive. (Linebaugh, 2008: 279).*

Following this line of argument, Julie Ristau (2011), co-director of *On the Commons*, suggests that:

*the act of commoning draws on a network of relationships made under the expectation that we will each take care of one another and with a shared understanding that some things belong to all of us—which is the essence of the commons itself. The practice of*

*commoning demonstrates a shift in thinking from the prevailing ethic of “you’re on your own” to “we’re in this together”. (On the Commons, 2011, online)*

Both Linebaugh (2008) and Ristau (2011) speak about the commons as an activity based on relationships where sharing and caring are integral parts of what Berlant calls “affective infrastructures” (2016: 399). The latter stem from the need to act collectively against a “broken world” (Berlant 2016, 399) such as the current pandemic crisis. In her interview for the journal *Atlantis*, Berlant argued that:

*things could happen [...] if we embrace relationality over sovereign individuality as the ground for social theory and good life; [...] if we begin to think differently about infrastructures and temporalities of dependence, care, and intimacy; if our project is collective and not sovereign – heroic – things could happen (Garcia Zarran, Ledoux-Beaugrand and Berlant 2017, 14).*

All above authors (Linebaugh, Ristau and Berlant) define the commons as rather living environments always in their making (never complete, fixed and/or static) and not as resources.

These theoretical underpinnings of *Buen Vivir*, commons, and commoning are necessary to clarify the way these concepts are used in this report and, specifically, how they intersect with Platohedro’s ecosystem and ways of doing.

### **A Point of Departure**

Platohedro’s connection with *Buen Vivir* is long-standing. Platohedro’s team members have links with the birthplaces of the *Buen Vivir* cosmovision: Ecuador and Bolivia. In 2012, Alex Correa, Platohedro’s co-founder, participated in a meeting/workshop of ALER, the Latin American Association of Radio Education, in Quito, Ecuador. In its events, ALER declared the importance of participation and inclusion, harmonious coexistence with nature, democratisation of communication, and processes of good living (*Buen Vivir*). In the following year, Alex attended the *1<sup>st</sup> Latin American Congress of Living Community Culture*, in La Paz, Bolivia. The *La Paz Declaration* (2013) concluded that

*Living community culture can only be understood as part of comprehensive processes of care for our common goods, solidarity economy, equality in the distribution of wealth, and the construction of deliberative, participatory and community democracies.*

In the following year (2014), and after reflective discussions for two years with the Spanish digital artist and curator Pedro Soler, Platohedro incorporated the principles of *Buen Vivir* in their vision plan. The first meeting with Pedro Soler took place during the *LabSurLab* in 2012, a series of community lab meetings with artists and (other) participants in cultural organisations and independent art spaces, held in Quito, Ecuador. For Platohedro, *LabSurLab* was an event of major significance: this was the point of departure for their connection and commitment to the *Buen Vivir* principles. In 2013, Pedro Soler came to Medellín to participate in *ComunLab* and then in 2014, he curated the exhibition *CasAbierta*.

Platohedro recognises that *Buen Vivir* is a concept deeply ingrained in the indigenous cultures of Colombia, where, in recent years, it has gained further importance as a political praxis for indigenous people’s rights. For Platohedro, the principles of *Buen Vivir* are a translation of ancestral knowledge practices to the present conditions and challenges of urban life:

*How we build relations with others; how we think about good living; how we incorporate good living in our practice. It’s the opposite of thinking about progress, development. So, good living,*

*Buen Vivir, is something more: it brings the human and the natural constellations together.*  
(Alex Correa, interview)

In the last decade, Platohedro has been committed to incorporating the principles of *Buen Vivir* in its organisation and projects. It has also included the concept of *Buen Conocer* (to know well/good knowledge) to acknowledge the importance of following “*open, participatory and collaborative knowledge and to the sharing of that knowledge*” (Travlou, Fleischman and Correa, 2019). The current Covid-19 pandemic has inspired further reflection on how, during a systemic crisis, these principles can become even more relevant, be deployed even further, reflect interpersonal relationships, and inform the building of infrastructures of care for everyone within Platohedro.

### **From Translation to Appropriation: Platohedro’s Principles of *Buen Vivir***

During the Covid-19 pandemic, and with Medellin in strict lockdown for several months, the Platohedro team decided that one way to check-in regularly with each other and sustain each other’s wellbeing was to continue their weekly meetings online. They came up with the idea to collectively create a re-edition of the *Buen Vivir* principles so that they can check how they are feeling as a team and how the Platohedro members are feeling with themselves (Luciana Freischman, interview). What begun as a regular check-in, an exercise of connecting with each other during the pandemic, evolved into a systematic re-evaluation and update of the *Buen Vivir* principles: “*a tool to make us think how we keep working during these difficult times. It’s an exercise for the cohesion of the group, [...] a tool for being together, for not missing our common objectives*” (Luciana Fleischman, interview). Platohedro’s re-edition of the *Buen Vivir* principles was also intended to be a toolkit useful to others, a gift. This idea related to the wider network of Platohedro. The gift was intended to strengthen relationships in at a moment of crisis by offering the possibility to imagine together an alternative world for collective wellbeing.

For 13 weeks, as many as the original principles of the ancestral *Sumak Kawsay*, the Platohedro team organised weekly online meetings. Each week was dedicated to one principle. The key question that directed this process was: “*how we imagine and connect, as a society and as individuals, to each principle?*”. Alex Correa read to all team members the original meaning of the principle; then each person reflected separately on it. In a shared document, each team member added their understanding of the principle. These individual perspectives were then brought to the meeting, where they were shared, discussed, and merged into collective definitions to develop a re-interpretation of the principle as a mashup. This process ensured that the re-interpretation of each principle reflected the diversity of the members’ ideas and perspectives. This synthesis was expressed in a carefully crafted, deliberately poetic language that often deployed metaphor and abstraction to redefine *Buen Vivir*.

The *Buen Vivir* principles themselves look like a code of practice. As mentioned earlier, *Sumak Kawsay* translates as ‘knowing how to live a good life’. The concept is about knowledge production as much as life experience, in harmony with oneself, others, and nature (the Universe, the environment). For example, the principle of ‘knowing how to eat well’ extends beyond nutrition: it relates to nurturing, as well as to land rights, food justice, and food sovereignty in response to the pandemic crisis. As such, it is holistic, inclusive, and political. Other principles, such as ‘knowing how to drink, to dream, to dance’, relate more closely to self-care. Then, there are principles, such as ‘knowing how to work’, that focus more on the collectivity. The latter principle is directly relevant to Platohedro as a workplace, and as an organisation driven by communal work – ‘*minga*’ in the Quechua indigenous language. “*When we work in a project, we think individually but then reflect collectively*” (Luciana Fleischman, interview). Evidently, all the 13 principles of *Buen Vivir* are relational: ‘knowing how to

eat' relates to health and land; 'knowing how to love' relates to each other and oneself; 'knowing how to dream' relates to our own inner self and extends to a collective vision.

Nonetheless, a critic could question whether a cultural organisation such as Platohedro, situated in the urban milieu of 21<sup>st</sup> century Medellin, can interpret and use an ancestral cosmivision without adulterating it, stripping it of its core value. For the Platohedro team, what their re-edition of the principles of *Buen Vivir* has to offer is exactly this: a translation and adaptation of this ancestral cosmivision to the contemporary urban context.

*We are conscious that we are urban people with lifestyles very different from those of the indigenous people. When we try to take this concept [Buen Vivir], [we do this] to repair something in the urban life, to try to teach other ways of thinking. (Alex Correa, interview)*

*We don't try to use [Buen Vivir] in the traditional way; it is an appropriation. We try to adapt it, to apply it in the urban context. We are trying to add new layers to it. (Luciana Fleischman, interview)*

As Philipp Altmann suggests, *Buen Vivir* itself is “the confluence of knowledge of different origins”; as such, it cannot be restricted to just one indigenous idea (Altmann, 2019: 5). Doing that would be perpetuating a colonial fallacy. Indigenous knowledge does not exist in the singular (Altmann, 2019).

In our interview in December 2020, three members of Platohedro, Alex Correa, Luciana Fleischman, and Maria R. Collado, reflected on this critique of appropriation by placing *Buen Vivir* into the ‘here’ (Medellin) and “now” (Covid-19 pandemic). “What does [Buen Vivir] mean for us now? [...] Maybe, now, it means something related to care: our self-care and care for others”.

Care is, indeed, pivotal for each of the 13 principles. It is especially relevant to the current situation, and invites further reflection on what wellbeing or, better, how to live a good life, may mean at present. Platohedro's work is about activating these principles and demonstrating their full potential for individual and collective transformation in real, everyday life.

Platohedro's re-edition of the *Buen Vivir* principles goes beyond the reiteration of the ancestral knowledges and practices of *Sumak Kawsay*. It is a remix and mashup that places these principles in the current situation and juxtaposes them with concepts such as the commons and commoning, which, as Luciana Fleischman suggests, “even if they're not the same, they're complimentary”. For Platohedro, the commons and commoning are closely related to *Buen Vivir* since they also refer to a common good. This interconnection is based on relationality:

*Buen Vivir involves everything, and [also involves] thinking something in common. And by 'everything', we mean also our relationships. Buen Vivir is not possible without commons, and commons are not possible without Buen Vivir. It's how we think and are together, sister to sister.*

For the Platohedro team, their approach to the commons is illustrated in this quote: “We started thinking of the common in singular” (Alex Correa, interview). This word relates more to commoning, the processes and practices of the commons, a way of thinking and making of a common. It is the processes and the practices of making a commons, a good living, that connect indigenous knowledge of *Buen Vivir/Sumak Kawsay* with the wider discourse on commoning.

## **Platohedro's Principles of *Buen Vivir*: Keyword Summary**

- The route is taken with others
- In a relationship with the environment
- Human and non-human, tangible and intangible resonate with each other
- Harmonious resonance
- Tools become a form of support for knowing each other
- Other forms of collaboration, common and free
- Actions, including self-care, become a political existence
- To understand the collective, to think from the collective
- *“Love for what we do is the engine of our work”*
- Think collectively, build a collective intelligence
- Love means always seeking wellbeing
- Listening to the rhythm
- Collective construction
- Gratitude and generosity
- *“The journey leads us to the construction of other possible worlds, materializing new realities based on dignity and harmony”*

### **Hacking the Principles, Establishing a Connection: *Buen Vivir* Radio Sessions**

To evaluate and reflect further on the re-edition of the *Buen Vivir* principles, Platohedro asked their wider network of collaborators, friends, and local activists to add their own layers of interpretation, “so [that] *it’s not only our voice but other voices too*” (Alex Correa, interview). They invited 13 people, including local artists, educators, dancers, scholars, activists, and art collectives and individuals from their wider network across Latin America to participate in individual sessions on a digital community radio. Each person was invited to discuss and reflect on one principle of *Buen Vivir*. According to the Platohedro team, they hacked other perspectives to add extra layers to these principles. For Platohedro, this is, in fact, a key working method when collaborating with others: “*We always work like that in Platohedro, using self-reflection, and then putting it into dialogue with others, with a broader audience and participants*” (Luciana Fleischman, interview).

If the re-edition of the *Buen Vivir* principles was a method that enabled the Platohedro team to maintain its cohesion and to continue working and being together, the radio sessions were an extension of this gesture of care: checking-in for others in the wider Platohedro network. The radio sessions became the way to stay connected during the lockdown and the uncertainty of the Covid-19 pandemic in Medellin and across the continent. Platohedro contacted their guests via WhatsApp with the request for a 2–3-minute audio recording of their reflections on one selected *Buen Vivir* principle. Luciana Fleischman, the Platohedro’s Residencies Programme Coordinator, invited resident artists, while Alexander Correa, the Executive Director, invited members of local social activist and pedagogical groups and organisations. All 13 guests accepted the invitation. According to Alexander Correa, this acceptance was due to the bonds of trust developed through long-standing relationships and successful collaborations in the past. As he said, Platohedro used their “*resources and connections*”.

### ***Buen Vivir* Radio Sessions: Keyword Summary**

- Alternative economies
- Interspecies relations: living well with viruses, stones, minerals, and everything that makes this universe

- Collaborative work for the creation of a common ground
- Observation and active listening (listening with intension)
- Meditation as a revolutionary act
- *Buen Vivir* exists in connections
- Andean Futurotopia as a relation with the systems of life entwined with technology
- The challenge of the pandemic for city rhythms and sounds
- Allowing conflict resolution through non-violent communication
- Connect with ourselves
- The walk as a musical sound journey
- Inner journeys of self-reflexivity
- Feeling the body as a territory (the biological and cultural body)
- New possible ways of transformation
- Balance with the planet
- Conscious reciprocity: to give and to receive – extending to all relationships, including that with the environment

### Using Radical Imagination, Playing with Machines: *Homemade Anomaly Antenna*

The final text produced by Platohedro for the *Power to the Commons!* project was titled: ‘*Homemade Anomaly Antenna*’. Written collectively by Alexander Correa, Maria R. Collado, and Oscar Narvaez, this work is about Platohedro during this time. It incorporates thoughts about what is emerging at this moment, and experiments on the activation of the *Buen Vivir* principles. Focusing specifically on the principle of ‘knowing how to work’, *Homemade Anomaly Antenna* presents an opportunity to experiment with a different way of working together by “*thinking from the collective*”.

Radical imagination was the key tool for developing these ideas and the text. Radical imagination is a paradigm shift, a complete re-invention of the familiar, and a thinking of things unthought of. It is a powerful tool for seeking social change and imagining a different world (artscollaboratory.org). Radical imagination is a collective activity, produced through dialogic encounters; as such, it is “*our capacity to conceive of the world as it might be otherwise*” (Khasnabish 2020 online).

In *Homemade Anomaly Antenna*, the team used radical imagination to design and experiment with faked machines: “[to] *imagine that this machine works in a different way; [to] try to play and think of a different way to relate with the natural*” (Alex Correa, interview). The reference to ‘the natural’ is crucial here, as the creative reimagining of the relationship between humans, non-humans, and nature is at the core of the *Homemade Anomaly Antenna* experiment. This echoes *Sumak Kawsay*’s core principle: the harmonious coexistence of all within Mother Nature (*Pachamama*). The *Homemade Anomaly Antenna* is “*an installation made of plastic, of fungi. It may look crazy, but it’s not. It’s a provocation to think of a much wider dialogue, beyond just humans – of all ecosystems around us*” (Maria R. Collado, interview). Interestingly, in this analogy, nature is represented by a machine. Technology is perceived by reference to the natural, through the metaphor of technology as an organism made of different particles – plastic and fungi – and through its mechanics that ensure that it functions harmoniously.

Maria R. Collado also refers to a “*radical poetic action*”, a metaphor whereby otherwise parasitical entities – both natural and artificial, such as fungi and plastic – live together in equilibrium, forming an assemblage. This metaphor of a machine that only works when different particles assemble together presents an analogy to the indigenous cosmivision. “*If we want to go further, we need to think with others*”. This provocation is, therefore, a step further from Do-It-With-Others (DIWO), which is rather anthropocentric, to imagining alternative worlds and futures that are made possible

only by Thinking-With-Others (TWO), by a dialogue between humans, more-than-humans, and nature. TWO may, therefore, be analogous to Acosta's proposition that *Buen Vivir* is "an opportunity to collectively design new forms of living" (Acosta, 2012: 195).

Lastly, *Homemade Anomaly Antenna* presents an opportunity to reflect on commoning as well. As Maria R. Collado puts it, referring to the processes and the tools used to collectively imagine and write about this machine, "there is something inside this text that's about commoning: how we built it".

#### **Homemade Anomaly Antenna: Keywords Summary**

- Radical imagination
- Other futures
- Digital communities
- Collective work
- New economic models
- Dystemic crisis
- Parasites
- Experimentation
- Networks
- Patriarchy
- Degrowth
- DIY and DIWO
- Anthropocene
- Machines
- Technology

#### **Another Layer, Another Tool: TWO (Think-With-Others)**

Tools and tooling are at the very core of Platohedro's work. The Platohedro team use, experiment with, design, and share tools "for working together, from radical imagination to creative actions, collective collaborations [...] for bringing new ideas" (Luciana Fleischman, interview). The use of tools became even more pertinent for them during the Covid-19 pandemic. As Alex Correa describes, "when the pandemic started, we were worried how we could continue living, how we could continue this *Buen Vivir* way of thinking. So, we tried to incorporate more tools in this concept".

In the three works, the key tool used by Platohedro was Thinking-With-Others (TWO). TWO informed the process and stages of the re-imagining of the *Buen Vivir* principles, as well as the radio sessions, where the Platohedro team invited their extended network to reflect together upon those principles, and *Homemade Anomaly Antenna*.

*The most important thing in all these processes is to think together in another way. We learned that working with affection is better. It requires another rhythm, another way of doing, that is collective and collaborative.* (Maria R. Collado, interview)

The current Covid-19 pandemic provided a fertile ground for activating the *Buen Vivir* principles in real life. As Luciana Fleischman remarked in the interview, "[the Covid-19 pandemic] helped us to understand and imagine the needs that right now are urgent in our city". The principle of 'knowing how to eat well' stimulated the reappraisal of the importance of appropriate food and nurturing in the current situation, and drove collective action for the distribution of such food to people who need it in Medellín. *Buen Vivir* was thus transformed into political praxis of solidarity and mutual aid.

To conclude, Platohedro's re-edition of the principles of *Buen Vivir* is a dynamic process that translates ancestral knowledge to the present urban condition reflectively and creatively. By doing so, it

becomes an opportunity to imagine another world together. Platohedro's gift is a reflective toolkit of principles of communal wellbeing that others can also rework and deploy. The process of thinking-with-others (TWO), for instance, can enable us to learn through unlearning, allow for difference within multivocality, listen with intension to others' stories, understand how to care for each other, and open new dialogues between us all: humans, more-than-humans, and nature.

**Meta-ethnographic Keywords:**

More-than-humans  
Appropriation/mutation  
Affective infrastructures  
Care  
Collective work (*minga*)  
Network  
Reflection  
Pluriversal  
Speculative thought  
Relationality  
Technology  
Horizontality  
Future  
Transformation  
Journey  
Free Culture  
Memories  
Pandemic

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