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The way we have come to live our lives, is because of our past. Many of the actions we do today, were chosen by people who are now long gone. For example, even if we don’t want to burn fossil fuels, we are embedded in a culture that does so. However, the actions of previous generations, that led us into this chaos, were made by people, who are now long gone, and don’t face any of the consequences. It is evident, that climate change is an intergenerational problem, and that it takes a while for one’s generation actions to be translated into noticeable effects. That means, that how we act today, is not only going to affect our immediate future, but also future generations, with whom we never meet, and may never have ties with. But that shouldn’t discourage us from acting, or should it? Because clearly, our predecessors, haven’t really thought about the long-term future of their imprint. They focused on their individual interest to exploit the common resources to their own advantage, which left us, and future generations to pay the price.

Living in the era of grave climate change effects, makes us feel lots of things: guilt, for the part we play in heating up the planet, grief for what we have lost, and will lose, fear about the future, and most notably anger. We are angry at the selfish decisions made by powerful people who let us here. They have sacrificed something we love, for money and interests. Like many others, I was shocked to see the recent Just Stop Oil’s action with soup on Sunflowers. The thought of destruction of that art piece distressed so many people, but it served the purpose to make the consequences of our continuing destruction of the natural world much more real. Afterall, there can be no art in a dead planet, and if we continue to attack the earth that we love, then cultural icons as the sunflowers, will become worthless as there will be no one around to value them.

Moreover, the right to a healthy environment is directly related to the fundamental right of life. If future generations instead of living in a healthy environment, to live full lives and accomplish all their dreams, they live in a world that sooner or later will not be able to sustain them, why bother bringing them into existence? Nevertheless, it is impossible to stop breeding. And it brings me to my point. Who is to take into account the fate and interests of future generations, and ensure that they live a life worth living?

Voltaire said that no snowflake in an avalanche ever feels responsible, but I think many people of my generation feel greatly the responsibility to not ‘pass the buck’ onto future generations, and to act immediately and accordingly. Even if past generations haven’t really thought about us, we feel morally accountable to change the narrative. But how can we do so, when the institutional foundations we have in place fail to consider the moral aspects of the problem and act on intergenerational concern? And then how do we move forward from national governments to an intergovernmental global level?