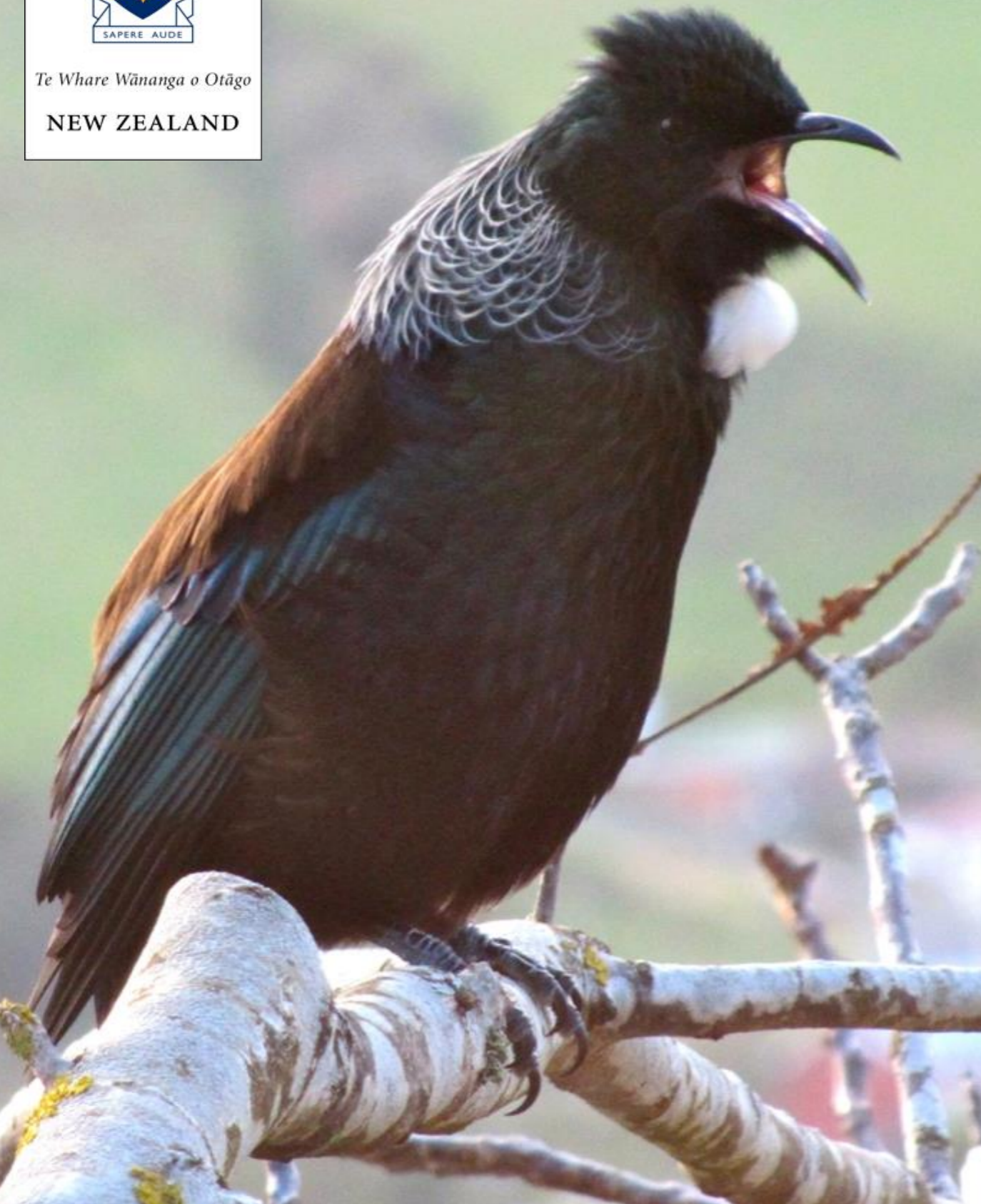


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Te Whare Wānanga o Otāgo
NEW ZEALAND



Conservation, Communication and Community

Jean Fleming

**The Centre for Science
Communication
The University of Otago**

Engaging the community

- The big issues of environmental degradation, climate and resource depletion require increased public awareness and understanding of science
- People are hungry for facts and highly connected to often dubious information on the Internet.

Getting the message across

Science communication theory says

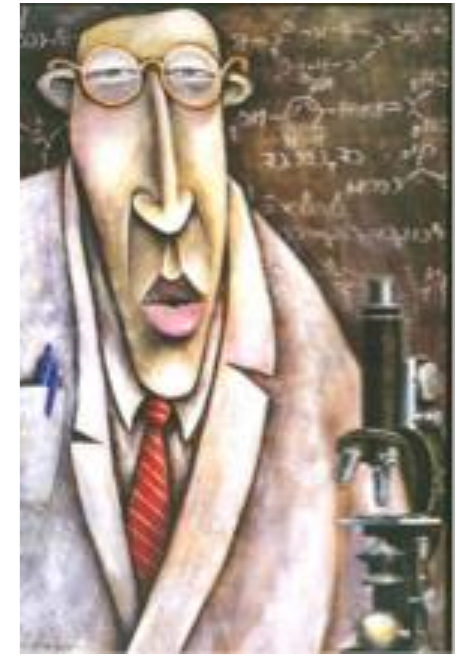
- Lecturing will not change attitudes
- We must engage with the public – “dialogue”
- Who is the public? Most have some expertise
- Are engineers, nurses, plumbers, chefs or farmers not experts?



Attitudes are hard to change

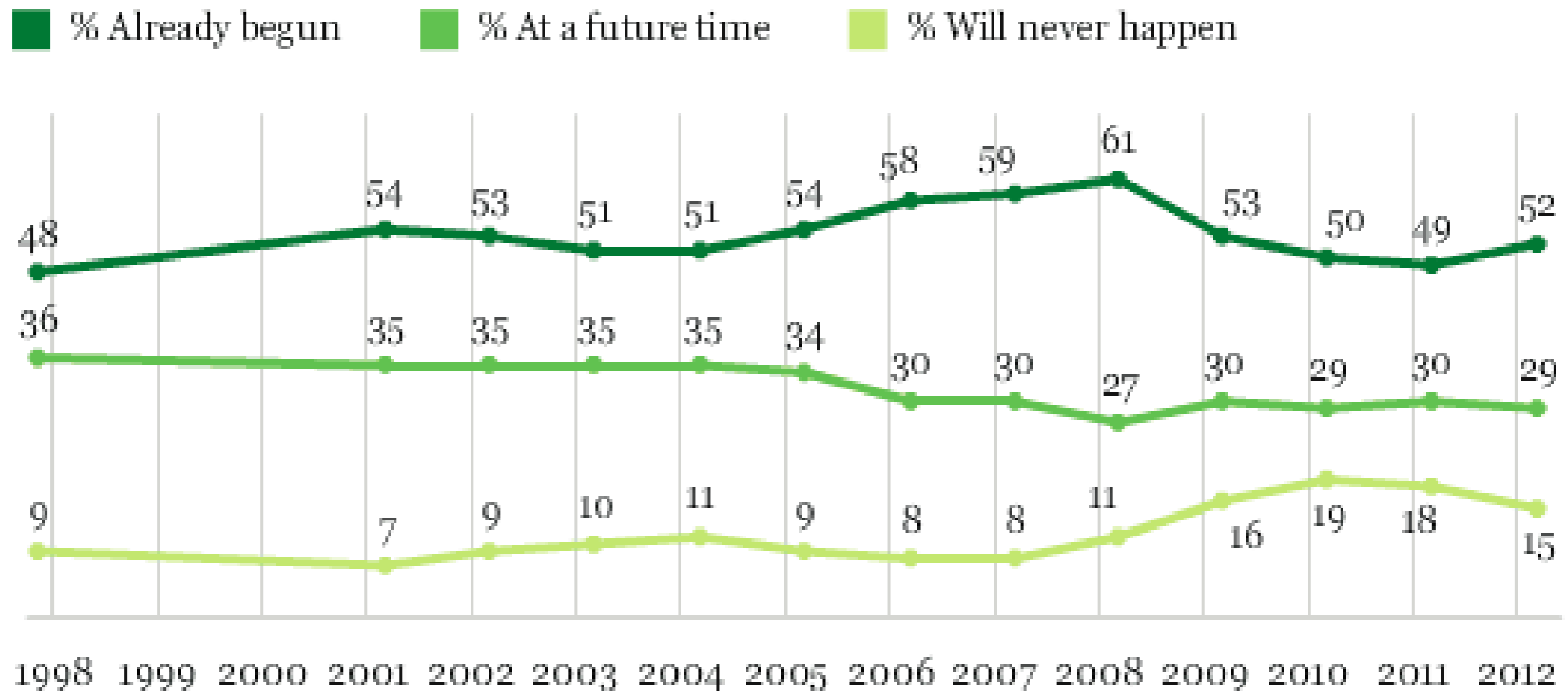


Photo: Rod Morris, DoC



- Even the longest or most entertaining lecture on the importance of conservation is unlikely to change people's attitudes.
- Often talking to an audience who agrees with you anyway.
- Sometimes a passion for conservation merely reinforces the "greenie" stereotype.
- Issues of economics, trust, employment and power.

USA – Gallup poll results on attitudes to climate change



Increasing scientific evidence of CC

GALLUP®

Attitudes do not change markedly in response to scientific evidence!

Change is happening

- A vast and growing body of credible evidence shows the climate is changing in response to rising CO₂ (IPCC 2013).
- Extreme storms, more frequent droughts and once in 100-year floods are getting more and more common.
- Economic systems are beginning to wobble – in Greece, Italy and Spain, if not the USA.
- The gap between the haves and the have nots is growing wider daily.
- People feel disenfranchised and helpless.

Public engagement

- People are beginning to listen, respect and communicate with each other and with local councils on certain issues: People's Panels; Resilience Forums
- Note the rise and rise of Farmers' Markets, Transition Towns and community gardens
- Collaboration towards civic decision-making
- A better way forward, positivity and hope for the future.

Dunedin Farmers' Market - JSF



Growing communities

Building a sense of community in Northeast Valley

[Home](#) » [Lifestyle](#) » [Magazine](#)

By [Bruce Munro](#) on Sun, 15 Sep 2013

[Magazine](#) | [Northeast Valley](#)

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Jenny Roxborough at the Northeast Valley Community Garden.

Connecting with dirt!

Brockville residents plan orchard

[Home](#) » [News](#) » [Dunedin](#)

By [Rebecca Fox](#) on Sun, 6 Oct 2013

[News: Dunedin](#)



Community garden project launched

[Home](#) » [News](#) » [Dunedin](#)

By [Brenda Harwood](#) on Tue, 25 Dec 2012

[News: Dunedin](#)



...the community orchard
...ve in Brockville are (from left)
..., Rose Richards, Sue Morey and

Starting from scratch

- Experiences in the first years of a child's life form the basis of their future life choices.
- In a world with fewer and fewer incentives to “go outside and play”, children often grow to be adults with increased tendencies of diabetes and heart disease, along with a lack of experience in the outdoors and a *disengagement* from nature.
- Do these children grow up with a different idea of what the world is like and a fear of the great outdoors?

Chawla, L. (2006). *Learning to love the natural world enough to protect it*. *Barn*, 2, 57-78

Burdette, H. L. & Whitaker, R. C. 2005. Resurrecting free play in young children - looking beyond fitness and fatness to attention, affiliation, and affect. *Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine* 159, 46-50.

Growing greener kiwis

- We need parents and grandparents to be good role models
- We need to let our children take a few risks
- Take your children and grandchildren into wild places more
- Treasure hunts, beach walks, forts and camping trips, in wild weather, as well as on summer days

Kellert, S.R. (2002) *Experiencing Nature: Affective, Cognitive, and Evaluative Development, in Children and Nature: Psychological, Sociocultural, and Evolutionary Investigations*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.



What we can all do now as role models

- Think global, act local
- **Participate** in public forums and discussions
- Buy less stuff and recycle more
- Have fewer children! *
- Watch less TV, read more books and tell good nature stories
- Drive less, walk or bike more.

* Sorry, I am really a reproductive biologist...



Community conservation



- Encourage wildlife in your garden or local environment
- Spay, curfew or get rid of your cat!
- Grow your own vegetables and participate in community initiatives, such as community gardens and markets – build community resilience.

Decision making from public engagement

- Empowering people to help make the decisions
- Outreach from “experts”, yes, but “Inreach” too!
- Initiatives world-wide, helping decision making on local governance, town planning, infrastructure funding and moves towards sustainability.



Get participative, provocative and purposeful!

“To help bring about the societal changes needed to reverse this trend*, conservation biologists need to be more proactive, provocative, and purposeful in increasing environmental literacy.”

- Decreasing biodiversity

Bickford et al. *Science communication for biodiversity conservation*.
Biological Conservation 151 (2012) 74–76.

There is plenty of useful work being done here

See the work of Claire Freeman, Yolanda Van Heezik and others, from the University of Otago.

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van Heezik, Y. M., K. J. M. Dickinson, and C. Freeman. 2012. Closing the gap: communicating to change gardening practices in support of native biodiversity in urban private gardens. *Ecology and Society* 17(1): 34
<http://dx.doi.org/10.5751/ES-04712-170134>



Research

Closing the Gap: Communicating to Change Gardening Practices in Support of Native Biodiversity in Urban Private Gardens

[Yolanda M. van Heezik](#)¹, [Katharine J. M. Dickinson](#)¹, and [Claire Freeman](#)¹



Childrenz Issues: Journal of the Children's Issues Centre

Volume 4 Issue 2 (2000)

Children, Young People and Their Environments: Changing Themes

[Freeman, Claire](#)¹; [Nairn, Karen](#)²

Abstract: A study explores recent trends in the changing nature of research in New Zealand about children, young people and their environments. In New Zealand, organisations seeking to facilitate participation of children and young people are on the increase and Agenda 21, First Call for Children and United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCROC) have all provided important stimuli for local government initiatives to include children and young people in their planning and decision-making frameworks.

Full content available



Journal of Environmental Psychology

Volume 32, Issue 2, June 2012, Pages 135-143



"My garden is an expression of me": Exploring householders' relationships with their gardens

[Claire Freeman](#)^a, , , [Katharine J.M. Dickinson](#)^b, ¹, , [Stefan Porter](#)^c, ², , [Yolanda van Heezik](#)^d, 

^a Planning Programme, Geography Department, University of Otago, PO Box 56, Dunedin, New Zealand

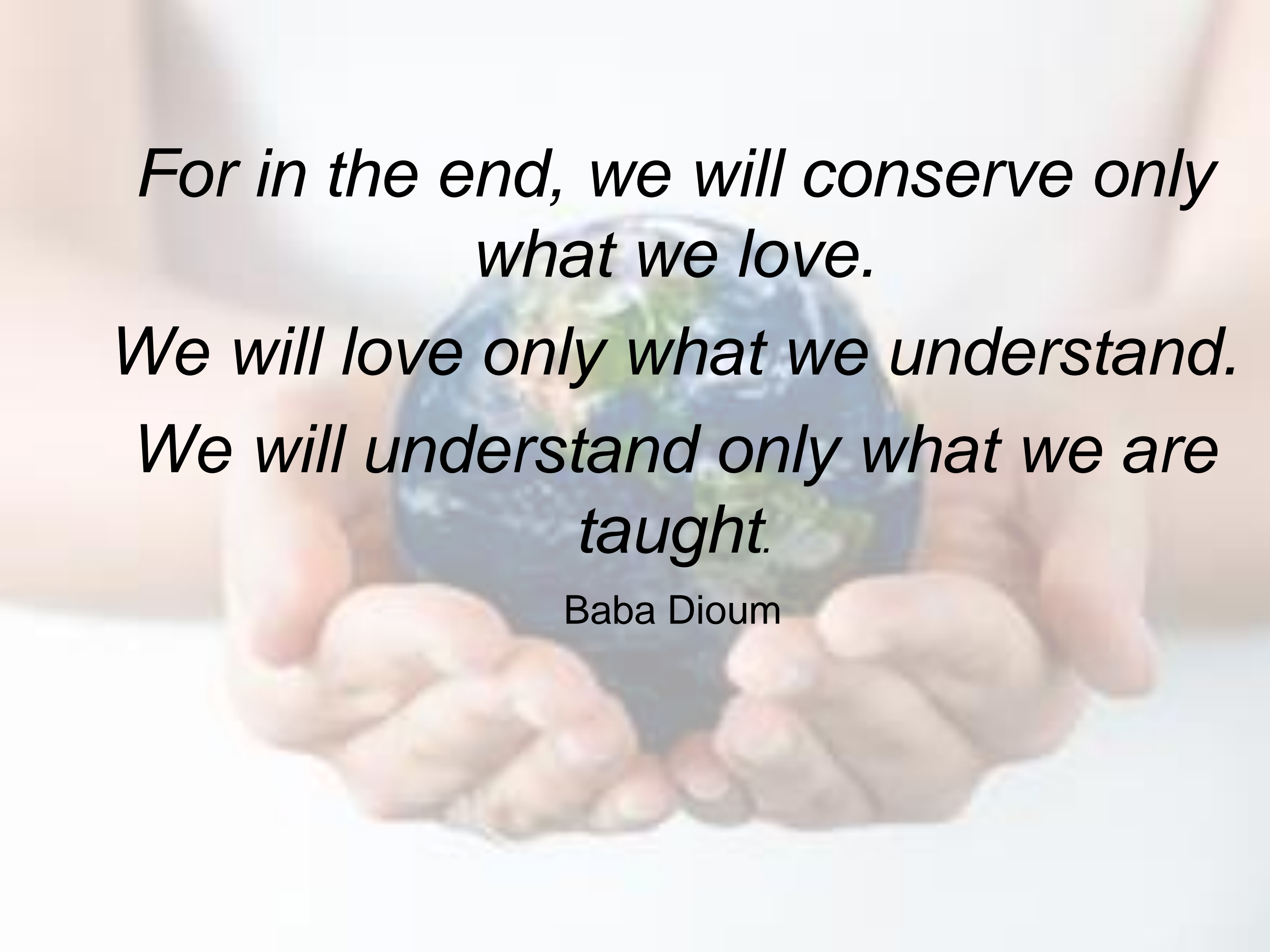
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Polarizing Participation in Local Government: Which Young People Are Included and Excluded?
Author(s): [Karen Nairn](#), [Judith Sligo](#) and [Claire Freeman](#)
Source: *Children, Youth and Environments*, Vol. 16, No. 2, Pushing the Boundaries: Critical International Perspectives on Child and Youth Participation - Focus on Europe, Australia, and New Zealand/Aotearoa (2006), pp. 248-271

A pair of hands, one from the left and one from the right, are shown holding a small, realistic-looking globe of the Earth. The hands are positioned as if they are gently cradling the globe. The background is a soft, out-of-focus light color, possibly a wall or a backdrop. The text is overlaid on the image in a black, italicized font.

*For in the end, we will conserve only
what we love.*

We will love only what we understand.

*We will understand only what we are
taught.*

Baba Dioum