



Alienating the SDGs

A critique from outside

Author: Juan Telleria Zueco + Artist: Maite Mentxaka Tena



"The Sustainable Development Goals are a plan to save the world ... they are of..the people ...



... by the people ... and for the people.



They will leave no one behind...



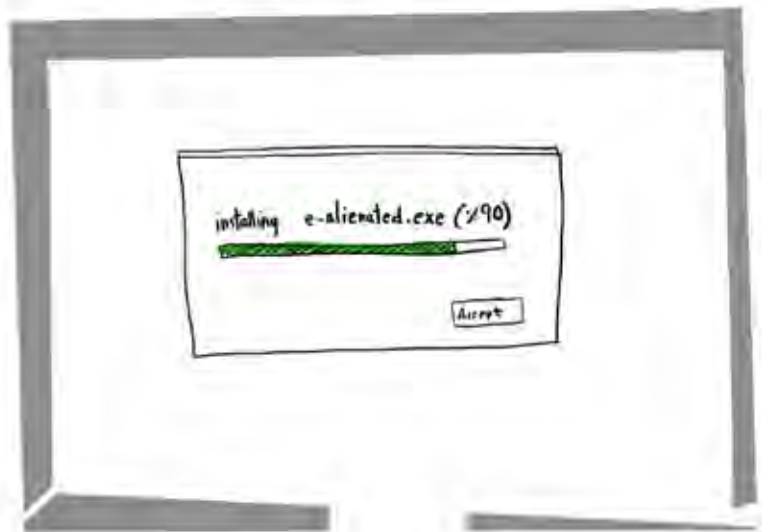
... and transform the world ...



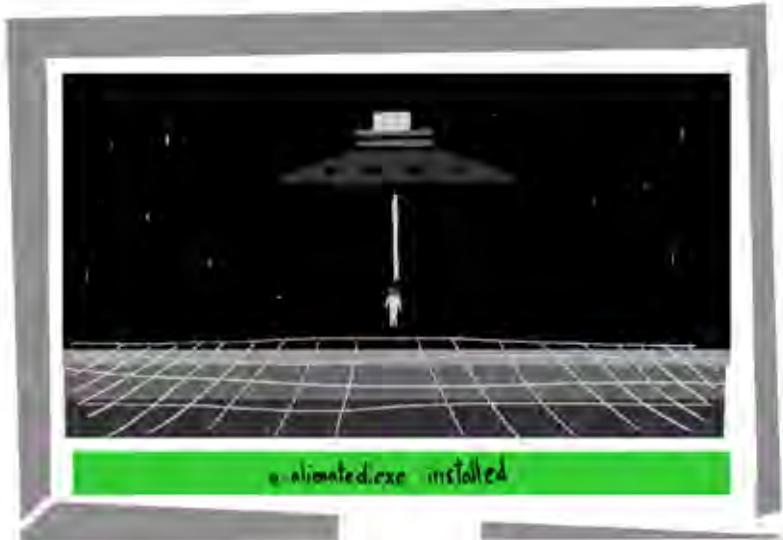
... for the benefit of all."

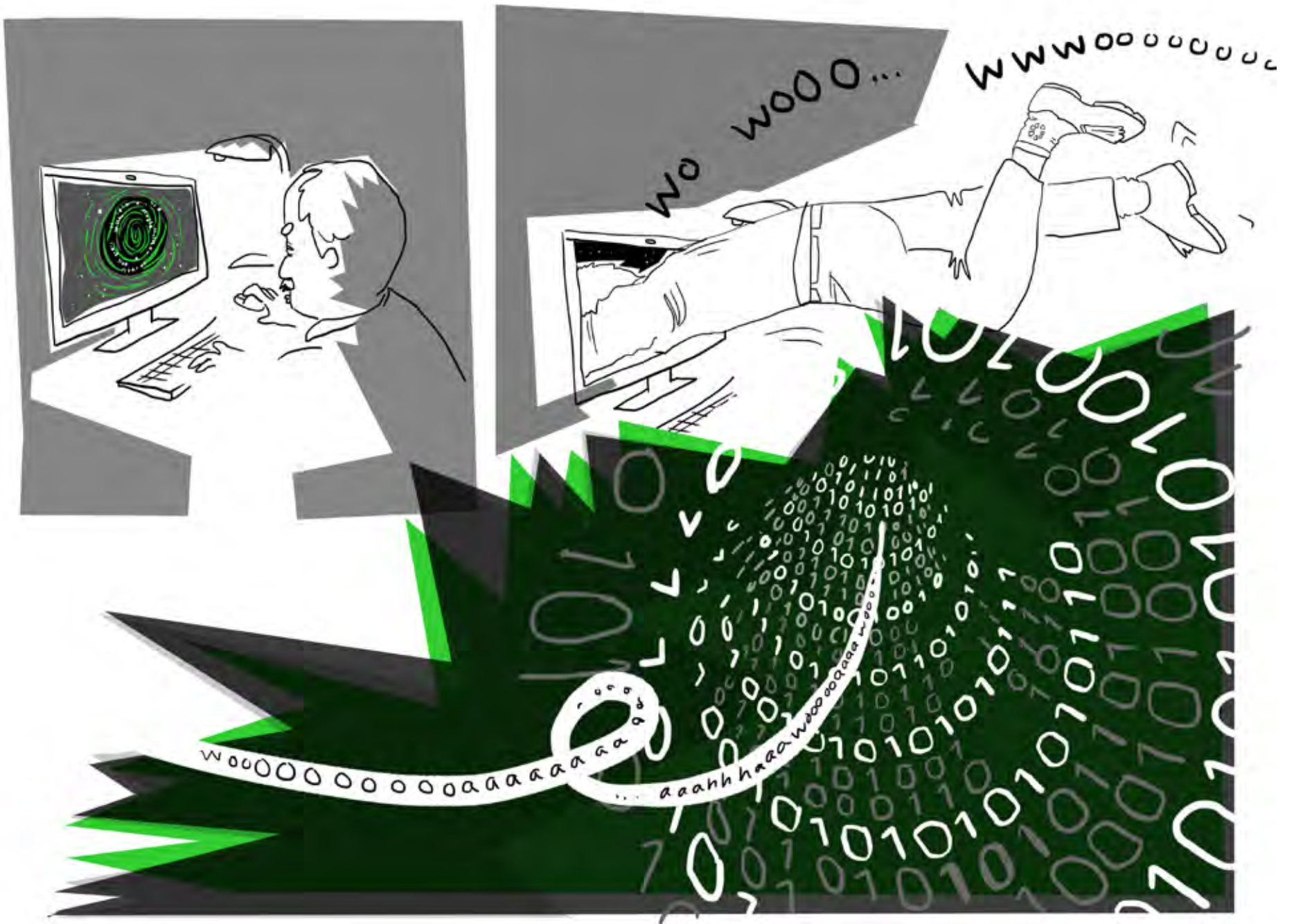


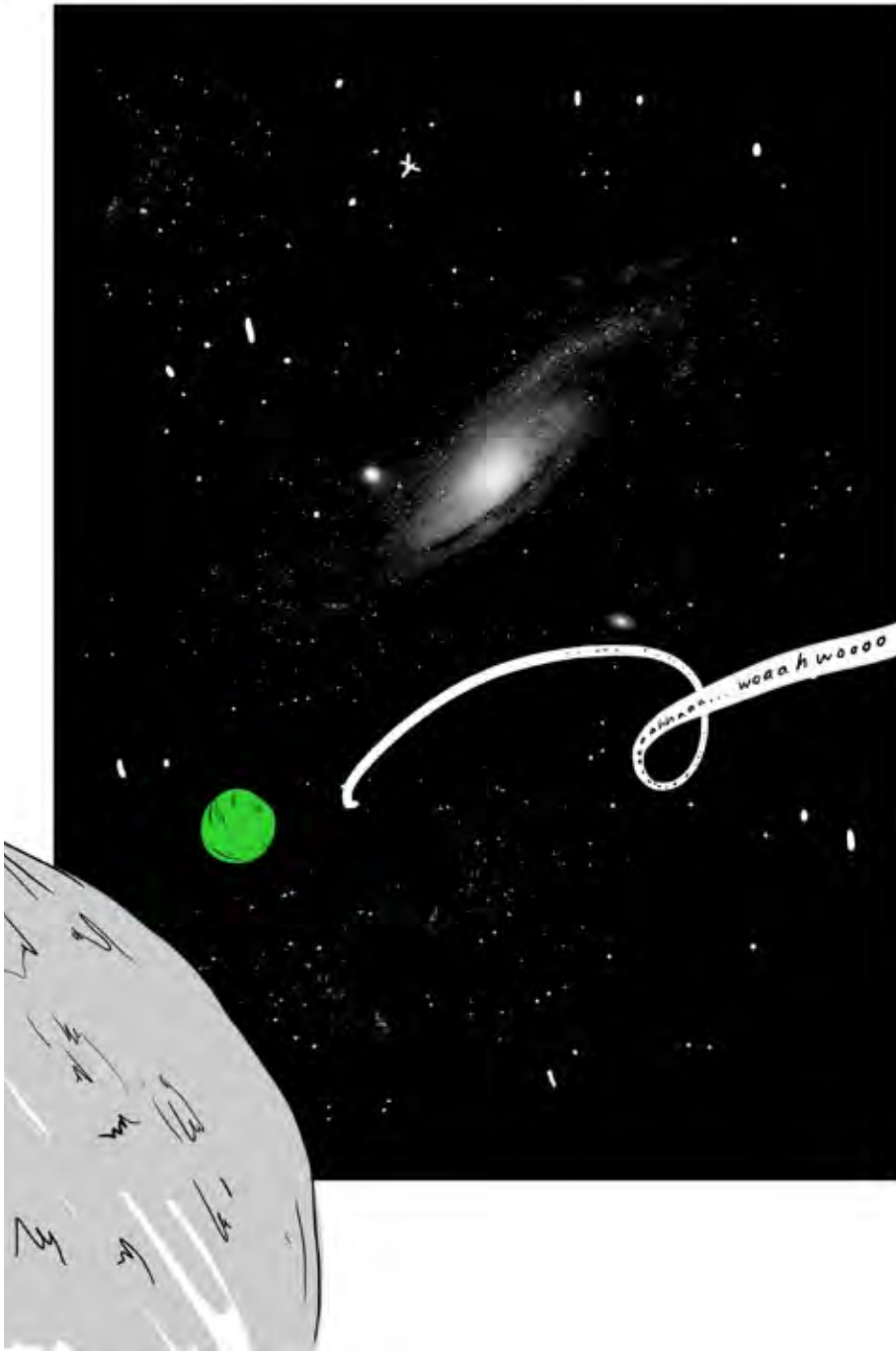
It's been a hard week.
I'm so tired. But I guess,
transforming the world
is hard work. I'll be
upstairs in my office.

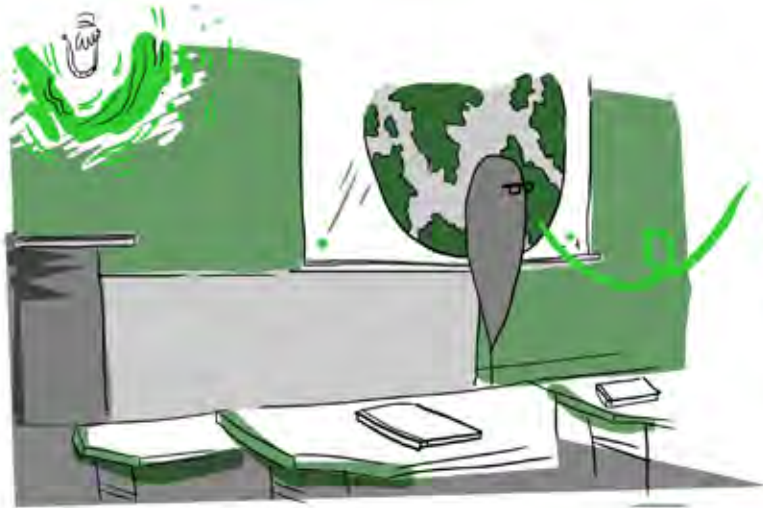


What?!

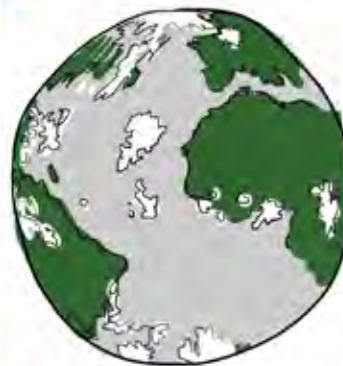








Hello everyone.
Please, open the book
to page 365...



The earth:
a lost planet in the middle
of nowhere, dominated by
a very young species
called humans.



They conquered and transformed the whole planet. Now they struggle
with their own contradictions...to the extent that they could soon disappear!

For our practical session,
we invited a specimen from
the earth. Let us speak to them.



This specimen belongs to the type of human who like to be regarded as he/him.
He is called Mr. K. He works for an organization called the United Nations.



Hello Mr. K. The earth is in a very difficult situation... even the existence of humankind is at risk!

Yes, we have important problems.

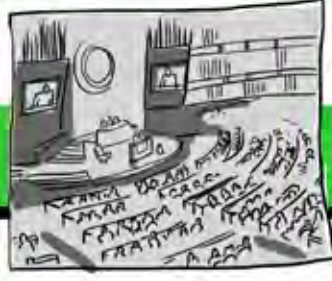
That is why, in 2015, we agreed to transform the world. Our plan is called the 2030 Agenda.



1960



1970



1980



1990



2000

However... you had similar plans in 1960, 1970, 1980, 1990 and 2000, which did not work.

What is different now?

Good question! In the new Agenda, WE ARE ONE and we all work together.



But the world is mired in conflict: will you be able to work together?

Yes, let me explain TWO IMPORTANT THINGS. First, we are one because we share the same universal principles.

PAUSE

Well, let us put Mr. K. on hold...



Historically, powerful groups ASSUMED that their principles were universal and imposed them on others.

For example, Mr. K.'s ancestors worked hard in making others understand their own universal truth.



When reason became the new God, they divided the world into different areas in order to teach others how to be rational, productive and efficient.



They even made rational and efficient USE OF NATURE, but it systematically benefited some at the expense of others.



You might not believe me: THEY DO NOT REALISE THAT ASSUMING A PARTICULAR PERSPECTIVE TO BE THE UNIVERSAL TRUTH SYSTEMATICALLY EXCLUDES OTHER PERSPECTIVES.



2

As Mr. K. explained, the 2030 Agenda reproduces the assumption that a set of universal principles exist, which will benefit all

KLIK =

What is the second important aspect, Mr. K.?

That the United Nations is the common house of humankind, which will help in creating a better world for all

PAUSE =

Sorry Mr. K.! This is important, too :



Eight decades ago, a great war shook the world.



The groups with stronger weapons and bigger armies won, and created an organisation intended to stabilise the new world order.



As Mr. K. explained, the 2030 Agenda assumes that the organization created by the powerful ones is "the common house of humankind".

KLIK!

Your plan is very laudable, Mr. K. However, I don't think it will work.

Why not?

Because it reproduces the most basic assumptions that took the earth to its current situation: the values of the powerful ones are assumed to be universal and beneficial for everyone.

What? Then how do you organise coexistence on the basis of such a relativistic perspective?

It is not a matter of relativism. In this planet we are well aware that the only universal truth is that there is no universal truth.

What?

We do not aim to materialise any universal truth. We just accept and negotiate our differences so we can coexist.

But that is not stable!

We are not afraid of contingency and change... We re-think, adapt and reconstruct our agreements and institutions every generation. It is not easy, but it works.

Oh... change? contingency? for every generation?... mmmhkkh...



change contingency every generation contingency
contingency every generation
change





[A few days later]
- United Nations, New York -



The SDG promotional tour was good. In one of my ... mmmhh .. "visits", I had some important insights that could help in transforming the world. I wrote a report ...



...Knock.knock,knock!



Mr. K... You have been working with us for a long time... you know the UN is a serious institution with a long history... our common house, indeed... the SDGs are of the people, by the people and for the people... if we work together on the basis of our shared universal principles and values, we will transform the world and leave no one behind... In any case, I WILL READ YOUR REPORT CAREFULLY...





