

Network on Economic Transformation [Netzwerk Oekonomischer Wandel]

It is time for another Economy. NOW!

The corona and climate crisis have revealed the disfunction of the current system, requiring a fundamental reorientation of economy and society. We witness an historic moment that prompts us to ask how we wish to live. Good answers exist.

We – people who have long been active in various alternative economic movements: Commons, Solidarity Economy, Degrowth, Economy for the Common Good, Gift Economy/Economy as well as Collaborative and Co-creative Economy – have joined together in the Network on Economic Transformation to represent in diversity what unites us: a future-friendly alternative to the ruling economic order. Even if our perspectives and proposals differ in detail, we share common ground. From different paths we all seek an ecological, equitable and democratic economic system. We do not see money, capital and growth as the central concerns of economics, but people and nature.

The current economic system divides society, creates extreme inequality and thus endangers democracy. It separates us from nature and destroys our livelihoods – and thus the system's very foundations. It alienates us both from other people and from our needs. It directs much of our life-energy into meaningless jobs, while at the same time much significant work remain unseen and undone. We reject the competitive logic and the compulsion to growth. We seek a good life for all.

An effective alternative uses three paths,
+ extending the commons
+ aligning markets with the common good
+ democratising the state

These three paths do not oppose each other; together they lead to a shared goal.

Extending the commons means

+ self-organizing and doing meaningful work beyond the market and state
+ producing through peer-to-peer processes what we need to meet our needs,
+ finding ways of having that enhance dignity for all

Aligning markets with the common good means

+ pushing back the logic of profit and competition and our dependence on marketized labor for survival
+ punishing business activities that harm people and the environment and rewarding strategies of stewardship and care
+ promoting diversity and democratic enterprises of appropriate scale

Democratising the state means

+ democratizing all areas of life as a way to reconfigure state power itself
+ setting policies that strengthen the commons and align markets to the common good
+ providing public services that enable participation for all, protect us from dependence on marketized labor and prevent any forms of structural exclusion

The good life for all

If we transform the economy in the ways outlined above, we are able to respect the ecological sensitivity of the planet and to ensure a good life for all. Constraints of the existing economy disappear and with them the fear of unemployment and poverty, social descent and exclusion. We enjoy basic material security in life-friendly neighbourhoods. We have more time for education, leisure and play, without neglecting the care-work. We create space for engaging with the big questions of life and our internal transformation.

A different kind of togetherness is the basis of such an economy. Because one thing is clear: we cannot exist on our own. It is an existential reality that there are always others who contribute to our lives and we contribute to the lives of others. We want to acknowledge this elemental interdependence and shape it in solidarity. Neither the invisible hand of the market nor technology or algorithms can do so. Only human creativity and cooperation can.

An economy that privileges some at the expense of others is not a free economy. A genuinely free economy requires regenerative ecosystems, social cohesion and real democracy. And the only way to realize this freedom in ourselves is by enabling each other.

We experience a rare historical opportunity. We know pathways to a good economy for everyone. Let us begin a new journey together. Now!

Silke Helfrich, Commons

Matthias Schmelzer, Degrowth

Christian Felber, Economy for the Common Good

Thomas Dönnebrink, Collaborative/Cocreative Economy

Dagmar Embshoff, Solidary Ökonomie

Friederike Habermann, Gift Economy/Ecommony

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