



The essential message...

We invite everyone who shares our core values of **people care** and **Earth care** to identify themselves publicly, including their connections to each other, to begin to build a linked global network of people who share these values.

The ultimate aim is to work together to implement for ourselves within the existing economy: a self-governing, eco-ethical economy, based on human dignity and creativity, renewable energy and a rediscovered, functioning democracy.

We don't have to wait until sympathetic governments take power.

We believe there are vast numbers of sympathetic people and projects around the world, across many groups, communities, movements, projects, businesses who are already working towards this vision.

We think that it is now urgent that we begin to link these pioneering projects to build mutual support in practical ways, to enable us to use less money and recycle the money we do have. As individuals and groups, we can actively join to form the embryo of a new society, *within the existing one*, based upon caring for people and the planet, leading towards a new social vision as outlined below.

But first, we need to stand up and be counted. We need a unifying vision which will provide both direction and the glue which holds all of this together.

The problem we are addressing...

(from 3 observers)

1 All over the planet, people are realising that we have lost our way. Despite a common understanding that very basic things like inequality, hunger, eco-system destruction, biodiversity loss and the threat of catastrophic climate change continue to get worse at alarming rates, the institutions that dominate the organisation of our world are not responding in anything like an appropriate manner. The levels of CO₂ in the atmosphere are increasing faster now than 10 years ago. Antarctica is losing 49 billion tons of ice each year. 85 people now own half the wealth on the planet. Bio-diversity loss is 1000 times greater than before the industrial revolution.

Something fundamental must change, and rapidly.

2 Our world is in urgent need of a new political economy that serves the hopes, aspirations, and wellbeing of common people and their communities and not the interests of capital and the unearned privileges of the wealthy few. It is time for popular movements the world over to unite around a common vision and a common platform for bringing such a world into being.

We propose that the ethical foundations of such a world require not only political democracy but also economic democracy. We propose that the purpose of economies is to serve the common good and the values of social justice, environmental stewardship, and the dignity, worth and free development of the person.

3 Our economic and political systems pit us all against each other. This is inherently unstable and dysfunctional. It breeds wars, corruption, crime, inequality and economic crashes. A new, collaborative society could be self-correcting and stable, creating the kind of society that really works and is what we want in our hearts.

Our core values

The values that are uniting this diverse group of people/organisations/businesses/movements are a desire to work together, attempting to align our lives with others and the natural world rather than seeing ourselves as separate, competing with each other, and exploiting the natural world. We are all on the same side.

	Our values are FOR	and AGAINST
People care	Treating everyone with respect, acting with integrity, providing for basic needs, all can make useful contributions to the community.	Racism, discrimination, exploitation, forcing one's will upon others, seeing self as in competition with all others
Earth care	Protecting/caring for wildlife and the natural world. Living lightly on the Earth, in modest comfort. Appreciating the environmental challenges we are facing. Attempting to align our personal lives and business dealings with the health of the environment.	Excessive or wasteful consumption, environmental destruction, putting profit before planet

Fair shares/economic democracy:

A third area of core values, about money and trade, comes directly out of these two.

	Our values are FOR	and AGAINST
Purpose of work	Wellbeing of people and planet as the driving force of the new economy, with businesses and organisations optimised to that end.	Optimised for maximising profit for shareholders.
Fair shares	Fair pay. All people are able to provide for their modest basic needs. All have opportunities to serve their community in ways that they enjoy and do well.	Paying as little as possible to the poor and as much as possible to the wealthy, Never-ending increase in inequality.
Money that serves	A money system controlled by those it serves, with sufficient quantities of money in circulation to supply their needs.	A money system that funnels money from poor to rich, with money always scarce.

Proposed steps

1 Publicly identify ourselves: As a first step, we invite people, businesses and organisations who share these core values of care for each other and the Earth to publicly identify ourselves including our connections to one another. This will form a linked global network of people with these values and will enable us to find each other.

We can state our values and our openness to a partnership with others who share them. This step alone will constitute a strong public statement. If we begin a collaborative relationship of mutual support with each other, it will raise the profile of this vision, and encourage others to join in.

Possible implementation: We can start with existing commercial social networks, and use a variety of approaches to spread the word. This can be done on many websites or fora, which can later connect to share membership.

2 Connect, meet up, discuss and share the vision: We all know many other people with similar values, but we'll soon learn that there are a lot more than those we already know. Once we see more clearly who we are, we can connect in order to share our visions, online and in local or wider meetings, perhaps across existing groups that share the core values. We can explore where we agree and where we disagree, explore possibilities of practical mutual support and joint action, and publicly declare those visions that we share.

We believe we have the core of the necessary vision, but there are bound to be developments, clarifications and new ideas.

3 Informal mutual support: Based on these discussions, we could then seek informal practical ways to support each other:

- by forming informal supportive communities where we give and receive, asking for and offering favours and gifts (food, ride sharing, caring services, clothes, used goods, etc.) with the aim of reducing our need for money.
- by seeing how we can support each other's existing projects and activities, with advice, physical help, organisational support, even financial support, etc. creating a synergy that moves them to a new level.
- forming trading partnerships, where we choose to preferentially buy from, sell to, employ and recommend those who share our values.

Doing this will further raise the profile of our shared vision. It will strengthen what we already do, may enable us to live with a little less money and earn and recirculate money between ourselves. Thus it will attract more people and more businesses who share our values.

4 More organised mutual support: Once there are the beginnings of identified people and groups, and informal support, we can specify and create systems to make all of it more efficient and resilient: a global system of support and exchange among those sharing these values.

- **Public identity:** Build the informal ways we have identified ourselves into a system that displays the values and reputations of us all, building on the connections between us, linking existing groups and like minded individuals. This

system of public reputation will provide a mechanism that makes our growing values-based trading system self-correcting and stable, in contrast to the competitive market. It will create a directory of people and businesses for us to patronise preferentially.

- **Handling conflicts and difficult people:** We all know many projects and groups that are destroyed by conflicts between its members and/or by those few people that leave a trail of disruption behind them, often despite the best intentions. A key part of the support needs to be people trained to spot and handle this as constructively as possible. We will all need to improve our skills at working collaboratively. This may include developing training in communication and organisation.
- **New community controlled software:** Build communications systems, apps, social networks, trading systems to make the trading, employing, doing favours and gifts easy and convenient, and to use reputation, ratings and reviews to maintain quality, integrity, fairness and environmental quality. We need non-commercial communication systems: open source, community-controlled versions of Facebook, Google, Amazon, eBay, etc. that serve us rather than prey on us.
- **New forms of money:** These systems can include local currencies under community control, community loan funds and crowd sourced funding, and a range of practical support and coordination systems.
- **Quality products and services that we want:** Finally, these growing networks will allow us to specify the kinds of products and services we want that are consistent with our shared values. This will create opportunities for businesses and organisations, and put pressure on those that continue with the current ways.

The beginnings of a coherent vision:

Any response to the current situation must involve a co-ordinated response by the millions of people working on the environment and climate-change, on human-rights, poverty, inequality: those of us who believe a better world is possible.

Millions of people and organisations all over the planet are doing extra-ordinary work attempting to support these values. Paul Hawken estimates somewhere between one and two million organisations, and describes them collectively as an immune system for the planet. But he also acknowledges that almost everyone works in isolation. The immune system is fragmented, and ineffective.

The vision below is an attempt to pull together some coherence between all these separate parts. The steps above are meant to lead towards and to accelerate the change towards that vision.

It is a longer-term vision, a direction, well beyond the present starting points or even the next big steps outlined above and are likely to change as we move towards it.

1 A new vision of the world

The new view sees people as working together for their mutual benefit and as stewards of the natural world. In Max-Neef's words we need to move from power and greed to compassion and the common good.

2 A new economics

A new economics needs to be established, based on the core values.

- An economy based on renewable energy and clean production.
- Production which establishes a circular economy where almost everything is re-used, and waste becomes unnecessary.
- Quality in goods, things that are well-designed, easy to use, long lasting, repairable and upgradable, and recyclable at the end of their life, **NOT** throw-away, highly packaged, shoddily made, resource-hungry goods designed to maximise profit.
- Money as servant not master: Businesses and organisations optimised to serve people and planet, not optimised to make profit. Financial transparency and integrity, paying fair and ethical prices and wages that enable a reasonable life, transparency over profits, wages and salaries so it is clear that these are neither excessive nor exploitative. **NOT** Work that makes money but doesn't serve people or planet, seeking highest payment or lowest financial cost regardless of effect upon people and planet.
- An economy for the common good which treats everyone with dignity.

3 A new kind of ownership

As wealth polarises, more and more of the planet is owned by a small band of extremely rich people. What were once common resources for the community run for the benefit of all, like land and water and more recently many public services, are now owned and controlled by small groups for their private profit. Many aspects of this must change if the core values are to be attained.

Land, for example, needs to be returned to the communities who live on it. The Commons must become the norm rather than the exception. Services for the community need to come from and be controlled by the community for common benefit.

Where private control and ownership remain, they need to be responsive and answerable to the community they serve.

4 A new way of organising

A new way of organising is emerging based on collaboration, autonomy and the freedom of the individual. The job of management changes to providing a service to the individuals and communities who are doing the important work. This new way of organising will need to be developed at all levels, to include all of our institutions: governments, corporations, businesses, hospitals, schools.

The traditional way of organising, based on hierarchy and command and control structures has to go. The co-operatives in northern Spain and Italy have demonstrated how clusters of collaborating co-operatives can produce highly effective economies. The Emilia Romagna area in Italy is not only one of the most prosperous in Italy, but also has the lowest level of inequality: the economy is dominated by cooperatives.

- Local autonomy and control by those affected, but with collaboration and co-ordination with other relevant groups to ensure resilience and viability; **NOT** hierarchical control from the top down.
- Dealing with people you know and trust; **NOT** with giant, impersonal organisations where you aren't considered as an individual.
- Offering ways to be of service, so that everyone's contributions can be seen and appreciated; **NOT** doing a job you hate for the money, preying on people's weaknesses,
- Services where server and servee know each other and where the service is genuine; **NOT** an exercise in power or exploitation.
- Public attention to the reputation of individuals, businesses and other organisations, with feedback in exchanges and peer-review; **NOT** 'let the buyer beware'
- Well-established means and commitment to constructive resolution of conflicts; **NOT** power to the strongest, losers just walk away or worse
- Organisations designed to benefit all those affected: customers/clients, employees, suppliers; **NOT** just owners.

5 A new politics

No one now believes that any elite, whether elected or unelected, can solve all the problems we face. The old model of supposedly clever people at the top of a hierarchy making all the important decisions has lost all credibility. Solutions will come from all of us, working in our communities, deciding on how to organise our own affairs. This will involve devolution of real decision-making powers to communities, and a way of governing where everyone is involved, responsible and empowered. We need to re-invent democracy.

The model is one of self-governance, with autonomous local groups responsible for their own issues, but with coordination and collaboration with similar groups. The same pattern – autonomy with coordination – would occur at many levels of scale, from the neighbourhood, to the town or region, to the national and international.

Broader level decisions, such as those involving national power grids, health systems and education will need to co-ordinate the diversity which will develop at the appropriate level of scale. The role of people working at larger scales will be to support and co-ordinate the work at smaller scales, not to impose their will upon them.

While the change to people taking responsibility for themselves is crucial, this change can be helped by partnerships with governments, especially between local governments and social enterprises. There are many examples of this, such as the energy co-operatives in Copenhagen or Emilia Romagna in Italy.

Conclusion

We believe it is time to take a new direction. We need to create the beginnings of a collaborative eco-economy driven by the wellbeing of people and planet. The steps described above demonstrate one possible route to growing the emerging vision. As we move through the steps, those involved will find that more and more of their local needs and services will be supplied through the growing networks. As we jointly organise and control our provision of goods and services, we will also be creating the beginnings of practical local self-government, where we organise and control what matters to us. This will create a powerful model, a real alternative, attracting large numbers of people and businesses, and provide a positive platform for new and existing political parties, creating a snowballing trend in the direction of the coherent vision described above.