

Workshop 1: Introduction to Solidarity Economy

Getting Together for a Solidarity Economy

Learning Objectives/Desired Outcomes:

Participants will leave this workshop with...

- Understanding that 'solidarity economy' means 'shared management of home'
- A vision of ourselves as economic experts
- An exploration of our relationship to economy, how much power we see ourselves having within this relationship
- Beginning to see the connection between solidarity and resilience
- Reflection on own experiences under status quo economy
- Exposure to and initial analysis of a range of solidarity economy strategies to meet basic community needs
- Understanding the difference between getting by, getting ahead, and getting together
- A greater sense of economic possibilities
- Enthusiasm to participate in more of the curriculum

Materials

- Chart paper or whiteboard and markers to scribe with
- "Unpacking the Term, Economy" presentation
- List of prompts for the "Step into the Circle" exercise
- Slideshow handout with slide images and brief descriptions
- "Eco Means Home" video, Movement Generation

Preparation

- Select one question from the Opening Circle sample questions and write it up for everyone to see
- Take time to review the suggested language in the "Unpacking the Term, Economy" presentation guide and in the handout so that you feel comfortable during the presentation, the language below is a guideline.
- Prepare posters or slides with the main points from "Unpacking the Term - Economy - Presentation"

Agenda

1. OPENING CIRCLE (Seeds) = personal connections

Pair Share	Time: 15 min
<p>1. Ask the group to break into pairs and ask each other a question related to economy.</p> <p><u>Sample questions:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>If you were Mayor, and could change one thing about the local economy, what would it be?</i>• <i>What is wrong with the current economic system?</i>• <i>If you could grant one wish to your family, what would it be?</i>• <i>What are the ways we meet our needs or help each other meet our needs that aren't a job?E.g. Cooking for each other, helping a neighbor fix their bike, cooking meals for people when they have a baby, "handing down" clothes, taking care of each others' kids, elder care, and working for justice and equity.</i> <p>2. Give the group 5 minutes to talk in pairs</p> <p>3. For the last 10 minutes, harvest ideas from the group by asking what they appreciated that they heard from their partners</p> <p>4. Scribe the ideas people share</p> <p>5. Once everyone has shared, acknowledge that this represents some of the economic expertise we have in the group.. We are all experts on economics and collectively we have many of the answers to the economic challenges we face</p>	<p><u>Purpose:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To tap into the economic expertise held in the group• For participants to recognize their own knowledge• For people to get to know one another <p><u>Facilitator's Notes:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Choose a question from the sample question list that you think will resonate most with the group.• Remember this is all about tapping into their knowledge, so you can keep coming back to some of the ideas they share to connect new knowledge to what they already know.

2. FIREBUILDER (Preparing the soil) = relationship and trust building

Unpacking the Term “Economy” - Presentation	Time: 15 min
<p>1. Whole group discussion: Ask the group, <i>When you hear the word, “ECONOMY” what do you think?</i></p> <p><u>Additional questions that can be used to keep the brainstorm going:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the economy supposed to do? • What are the different parts of the economy? • What are the things you hear in the news about the economy? <p>2. See the Presentation Guide (below).</p> <p>3. Use the IMAGES (see Powerpoint) and ask questions throughout.</p>	<p><i>Specific content below derived from Movement Generation's Meaning of Home curriculum/Just Transition Strategy Zine</i></p> <p><u>Purpose:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole group discussion is a chance to unpack what economy means to folks in the room. • The presentation is designed to demystify economics <p><u>Facilitator Notes:</u> In the whole group conversation, people will usually say things about “the economy” including, money, corporations, jobs, unemployment, profit, etc.</p>

3. BRIDGE EXERCISE (Planting the seeds) = connecting personal experiences to the big picture

Step Into the Circle: <i>Getting By, Getting Ahead, or Getting Together</i>	Time: 30 min
<p>1. Form a whole group standing circle</p> <p>2. Let participants know you will read a series of prompts. If the statement is true for you, step into the circle and notice who is with you.</p> <p>3. Read the following prompts (You can make up more on the spot if needed):</p>	<p><i>This workshop has been adapted from exercises designed by: Center for Popular Economics. Stepping Stones to Creating a Solidarity Economy. 2004. www.populareconomics.org</i></p>

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. You regularly run out of money at the end of every month, with bills left to pay have had to buy groceries on a credit card b. You can't get a credit card c. You have had to move more than once in the past two years d. You have lost your job or had to look for work in the past 3 years e. You have to work (or have had to work) 2 or more jobs to just get by f. You or someone you know has been out of work for more than 6 months g. You or someone you know has been out of work for more than 1 year h. You are smart and creative when it comes to money and resources i. You are strong and will continue to survive even when times are hard <p>4. At this point, when everyone is clustered in the middle, ask the participants to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Raise their hands in the air b. Take the hands of two other people with their hands. c. Without letting go of anyone's hands, untie the knot. <p>5. Sample talking points:</p> <p><i>Now we can all see that there are many ways that the dominant economy doesn't meet our needs and puts pressure on us – we all feel the squeeze, one way or another. Everyone put your hands in the air. Now take the hands of two other people with your two hands. We are now in a big circle in a knot. And like any ecosystem, we are all connected. The economy is how we make and manage those connections together. Untie the knot. Working together we can all have the space we need and the connections we need.</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. The group moves around to untangle the knot without letting go of any hands. 7. Briefly present “Getting By, Getting Ahead, Getting Together” - see Addendum B 	<p><u>Purpose:</u></p> <p>The goal is to have all participants in a tight knit group at the end with an understanding of the difference between survival, competition, and solidarity</p> <p><u>Facilitator Notes:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● During step #3, present the “Getting By” image by using PART 1 of Presentation Guide B for this section ● Note: you can say, “you or someone close to you...” if you want to keep it more open. ● With youth, you could include things such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ You have been late to school or work because of public transportation ○ You or someone close to you is incarcerated (in the prison system) ● During step #4, present the “Getting Ahead” and “Getting Together” images by using PART 2 of Presentation Guide B (below).
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4. BIG PICTURE LEARNING (Sun and Water) = New learning/big picture content

Solidarity Economy Slideshow	Time: 15 min
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Building off the feeling of solidarity established in the last exercise, introduce the slideshow by saying something like, Let's look at different strategies people have come up with to create an economy that's about getting together... 2. Give everyone a handout that includes each slide and a brief description of each solidarity economy project and ask them to put a star next to the ones that seem to address the economic challenges that they see and experience in the community 3. Share the slideshow, talking briefly about each project and giving space for people to ask questions 	<p><u>Purpose:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To make the concept of a solidarity economy more concrete for participants • To spark dialogue and critical thinking about the possibilities of the solidarity economy <p><u>Facilitator Notes:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The presenter should be prepared to talk about each slide briefly. • Feel free to change out the case studies in the slideshow to fit whoever is presenting and to make it relevant to participants

5. CREATING CONTENT (Harvest): Analysis and/or action steps

Critical Dialogue: Opportunities and Gaps	Time: 15 min
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Form a seated circle and ask everyone to bring their slideshow handouts 2. Ask the group: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>In seeing these examples of solidarity economy projects, what are you excited about?</i> ○ <i>In thinking about what people shared earlier about what's not working for us in the current economy, are there solutions that stand out to you that could help address the economic challenges we face in our community?</i> ○ <i>Which kinds of projects have you already seen or are participating in?</i> 3. Then ask: 	<p><u>Purpose:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For the group to think critically about the solidarity economy projects they saw in the slideshow and make the connections to the economic challenges the community faces • For the group to realize they can invent their own solidarity economy solutions

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Did you notice any gaps? What economic challenges do we have that aren't addressed by the projects you saw in the slideshow?</i> 	<p><u>Facilitator Notes:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At this point, nothing needs to be resolved - this is just a chance to share thoughts that are coming up. • If people disagree, frame it as a critical question and write it up on the critical questions sheet to be addressed over time
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6. CLOSING CIRCLE (Saving Seeds) = Reflection

<p>Action Circle</p>	<p>Time: 10 min</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Form a standing circle 2. Thank everyone for their thoughts, energy, and commitment 3. Go around the circle, have everyone share how they feel and one action they would like to see the group take to start building the solidarity economy in the neighborhood 4. Once everyone has shared, give some closing thoughts. Sample talking points: <i>We don't need an economist to explain to us how the economy works or what kind of solutions we need. We live the economy every day, we know what our families, neighbors and communities need, and we understand what holds us back. We are the experts we have been looking for.</i> <i>In the next two sessions we will be looking at how power and oppression are used to hold up the survival economy and how we can start getting together to challenge oppression.</i> 	<p><u>Purpose:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To build energy for the work ahead • To harvest action ideas coming up from the group <p><u>Facilitator notes:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure to take note of any action ideas that come up from the group. • You want to be tracking the groups ideas and finding opportunities to act them and honor the wisdom and strategy the group is developing

ADDENDUM A

Image - Eco

Let's start with Eco. Eco - literally means home. There are many ways to think of home- house, neighborhood, even mother earth (house, neighborhood, and earth)

Image - Ecosystem

Ecosystem is "all the relationships in your home - from the plants and animals to friends and neighbors. We are all part of ecosystems, even in the city. Ecosystems can be as small as a drop of rain - bugs, water, dirt - or as big as the whole planet.

Image - Ecology

Ecology means "knowing your home". There are many ways that we know, study or understand our home, from gardening to getting to know people, to making a budget of what we have to spend (or the resources we have to work with). Gardening, greeting neighbors are examples.

Image - Economy

Economy is "management of home." There are many ways to take care of our home. It includes our work, our relationships with each other, how we meet our needs, how we make decisions, etc.

At this point in human history we are experiencing a massive change in how economy works. Our economy is now global.

IF YOU SCREW UP THE ECONOMY, YOU SCREW UP THE ECOSYSTEM

If you decide to dump waste into your river, it gets polluted and the fish die and you can't drink the water.

The first step to taking care of our home, is taking control of our work, and taking care of each other. If we control our work and work in our collective interests, we are much less likely to over exploit.

THIS SECTION CAN BE ADDED IF TIME

NOW What does THE ECONOMY mean?

THE Economy means the particular way we “manage our home” right now - work, needs, goods and services - Capitalism (exploitation of the natural world - including work), financial markets, speculation markets (making money off the future value of things - like land and housing).

They started calling it “THE ECONOMY” back in the 40's and 50's. One reason is to make it the only thing possible. But we have always had ways of meeting our needs that don't depend completely on “the economy” - on capitalism, exploitation, greed, and hoarding. “Solidarity Economy” is a new term, but it is an old idea. Our peoples have been sharing, gifting, cooperating, and co-creating, forever - back in our home countries, in our traditions and even how we live today.

What are the ways we meet our needs or help each other meet our needs that doesn't depend on “the economy? E.g. Cooking for each other, helping a neighbor fix their bike, cooking meals for people when they have a baby, “handing down” clothes, taking care of each others' kids, elder care, and working for justice and equity.

This is how we do Economics. This is Solidarity Economics.

ADDENDUM B

Getting by, Getting Ahead, or Getting Together

After Step into the circle exercise:

Image - Getting By.

*When we look around our communities, what we see are a lot of folks **Getting By**. Trying to make ends meet; putting food on the table, paying the rent; trying to keep our heads above water from one week to the next.*

Image - Getting Ahead

The answer to Getting By, we are told, is Getting Ahead. The current economy thrives on the aspiration (hope) that you can do better if you just work hard enough. But who are we getting ahead of? Who gets left behind to only Get By

Possible questions:

- *Who in our society is Getting Ahead?*
- *Have you ever experienced others getting ahead by taking advantage of you or others, or not sharing fairly?*

Image - Getting Together:

Getting Together is the idea that we can all be better off, and nobody left behind, if we focus on the economics of “WE” rather than “ME.”

There are lots of ways we are already getting together, which we talked about before. Now we are going to look at the different kinds of economic models so that everyone in the community can get ahead together.