

# Solidarity Economy Workshop

## Pathways to a just and sustainable world

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### 1) Guided Visioning (15 min including sharing)

*Close your eyes. Imagine that your vision for a just and sustainable world has come to pass.*

*Breathe in deeply, what do you smell? What do you hear?*

*You are walking - what are you walking on? A sidewalk, a pedestrian path.*

*What do you see as you are walking along? Cars, bicycles? Buildings - what kind of buildings?*

*Parks - what do they look like, who is using them?*

*People - who do you see? Do you know them?*

*You arrive at your destination. What have you come here to do? Work, visit, volunteer, shop?*

Open your eyes, give a stretch.

Do a go round and have each person share an image.

Summarize: together with participants, pull out strong common themes, eg. people having enough time; green, lots of plants; lots of families/lots of children; safe; diversity; happy

### 2) Values and principles (20 min)

Give everyone one or two stickies. Have everyone write a one value per sticky that is cherished in their vision. Have each person share their value and briefly elaborate if necessary. As you go along, post the stickies on flipchart or writeable surface. Try to group them under the SE principles of solidarity, equity/equality, democracy, sustainability (even though these headings aren't written up yet). For example: trust, respect, love, cooperation, sharing, could be grouped together under solidarity. Everyone is treated equally, everyone has the same opportunity to reach their full potential, could be grouped together under equity/equality.

When all the stickies are up, explain that there is a growing global movement to build 'another world' – one that works for people and planet. It's grounded in principles of

- Solidarity
- Equity/equality in all dimensions (race, class, gender, etc.)
- Democracy – participatory democracy in the workplace, community, educational system, governance, as well as the electoral sphere.
- Sustainability – integrating our economy into the natural environment
- Pluralism – this means that SE is not a one size fits all approach. There are many different paths that will work in different times, places and cultures.

Some of the stickies might not easily fit in under one principle or another. The reality is that this stuff doesn't necessarily fit nice and neatly into boxes.

Having identified important values in our vision of a just and sustainable world, let's look at our economic system of capitalism.

### 3) Does capitalism support these values? (20 min)

**Defining capitalism** – the [Center for Popular Economics](#) uses these five characteristics to describe capitalism:

- Private ownership of the MOPs
- Profit maximization
- Commodity production
- Market exchange
- Wage labor

Does this system that we live in support the values that people listed as being important foundations for their vision?

Facilitator's notes: might need to clarify that a **capitalist enterprise engages in all of these aspects**. A worker coop may make profits, engage in commodity production and engage in market exchange, but since it does not have the owner/worker class structure, it is not a capitalist enterprise.

### 4) So what's the alternative? (25 min)

Question: What do you do, what are you involved in, what do you know of that is non-capitalist?

Write answers on flipchart. Fill the sheet with ideas – depending on the group, you may have to add some things in as well as explain what some practices are.

Summarize:

- There's a huge foundation upon which to build
- Some of these practices would be considered alternatives, some, such as government services (schools, parks, roads, safety net, etc) would not. Some of these practices are very old but have been updated with new technology or organization, for example, community land trusts build on old forms of property ownership)

### 5) Show Solidarity Economy Prezi (10 min) <http://prezi.com/uaa5vaqmdllj/solidarity-economy/>

This is a way of presenting the SE as an economic system as opposed to a collection of unrelated practices or economic alternatives.