

## Building an Economy for the Common Good Mapping Community Organizations Building an Equitable and Sustainable Future



graphic: peoplesgrocery



graphic: Matt Wuerker

### Course Orientation

**Purpose:** This section of the study guide orients the facilitators to the purposes of the course and important preparations to make the course a success.

**Paradigm:** In this age where our economic and political systems are unable to solve our most vexing problems, common citizens must come together to identify actions toward solutions for creating a just, equitable and sustainable future.

**Context:** Since the spring of 2015, the Grassroots Institute has facilitated classes and workshops to address the systemic problems of our social, economic, political and environmental systems. In the Fall of 2017 we went from talking to action with two series of workshops where participants identified organizations that were already working to create an Economy for the Common Good, and then went into the community to gather information on those entities. We did this course in a series of eight, two-hour workshops. This study guide follows that model although it can also be used to design your own process for mapping your Economy for the Common Good.

**Preparation:** We have found that it takes at least two facilitators to make the workshops work well for multiple reasons. On a conceptual level, multiple facilitators model the cooperation we are looking for in the Economy for the Common Good. On a functional level, multiple minds and bodies are needed to carry out the many tasks of this project, which should have a significant, positive impact on your community.

We have had groups of participants that vary between six and twenty-five people. More than 25 participants is probably too many to handle. To successfully carry out this project you need a core group of ten to fifteen people.

You have to decide how long each of your workshops should be and how often they will meet. Our initial mapping workshops were three-hours long. Much of that time was taken up with the “bicycle-designing and building process.” The second series of workshops were two hours long and that was fine. We also found that it helped to have a five-minute break in the middle of each workshop. At the end of the workshop about ten minutes was allowed for community announcements.

We held workshops every other week. This gave people time to do the necessary work of the mapping project. This is a participatory workshop that requires everyone to work on it outside of the workshops. Participants spend considerable time collecting information on the organizations that make up the local Economy for the Common Good. We also discovered that it is important for the facilitators to meet at least once between workshops to both prepare materials for the next workshop and to organize the flow of each workshop.

We held these workshops at 10 AM on Saturday mornings and often went out to lunch afterward to assess how the whole project was going. Saturday seemed best, because it allowed working people to be part of the process. We have often held classes in the evening, but we personally function better in the mornings. You decide what will work best for you and your group.

We attracted course participants in many ways. Interviews and public service announcements on local radio and TV and in local papers provided good results. Here is a sample of a [newspaper article](#), which you could modify as an email appeal or a public service announcement. Access to extensive local email lists is very helpful; check with allied groups to see if you can use their email list or if you can place an article in their newsletter. We also promoted the course with extensive use of posters. Here is a [sample poster](#) we used. We can supply this poster as an InDesign file for you to modify. Another good way to get participants is through personal phone calls or word of mouth. Depending on how tech savvy your participants are, social media is also a good way to spread the word and attract participants

A week before the first workshop, send all participants a welcoming email, a pdf of the issue of *Justice Rising* on [Building an Economy for People and Nature](#), and an article on your own Economy for the Common Good if you can find one. The day before the first workshop, send a reminder about the time, location and other pertinent information about the workshop.

Workshop members choose the parameters of your local Economy for the Common Good and the organizations that will be included in your map, along with the specific information you will gather on those organizations. They will have input on how to create the map, identify the organizations, publicize the results, and help build relationships among all of the organizations.

In this study guide we provide all the materials you need to produce these series of workshops including:

- Educational material on economies for the common good
- Lists of videos;
- Reading materials;
- A sample cover letter and survey form for collecting data;
- Outlines for spreadsheet data collection;
- Suggestions on how to do the mapping;
- Suggested plans for each workshop.

These workshops are set up to cover the processes involved with putting the map together. They appear in the order they would logically happen. This is mainly for the ease of presenting the material. You may want to introduce all of these aspects at the beginning workshops and get people working on them all right away. These will be *your* workshops and you should modify, change, and create the course as you see fit. Feel free to contact us if you need support or have any questions or comments on the workshops. Our contact information is on the title page of this study guide.

Facilitators of the course should review all the reading material and prepare a plan for each workshop with a specific timeline to keep the workshop moving along. If you have

never facilitated workshops before, it is important to understand that to some degree you are the entertainment. Our experience is that everyone has a performance persona that comes to the fore once the workshop begins. Embrace that aspect of your persona. You can do it easily. Just make sure you have fun!

Also you will have to be a timekeeper and umpire. Some people have too much of a performance persona and will over-load the network. And others are shy and will need some respectful coaching to enter into the discussion.